



SRINAGAR—THE MAR CANAL.

THE REALM OF THE GODS ;

A TALE OF TRAVEL

IN

KANGRA, MANDI, KULU, CHAMBA, KISHTWAR, KASHMIR,
LADAKH AND BALTISTAN.

BY

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21st Punjabis.

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The regions which Hydaspees lavas, the river of romance.

Horace, Odes I, 22.

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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To

THE MEMORY OF

MY BELOVED MOTHER,

FLORENCE ENRIQUEZ,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

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THE REALM OF THE GODS.

CHAPTER I.

KANGRA AND MANDI.

Hoshiarpur—Kangra—Marriage customs of the Dogras—Superstitions—Dera Gopipa—The Godlings—Ganesh—Bhairon—Siddh Droat—Jawala Mukhi—The Dogras—Their classification—Lumbagraon—The Katoch Rajas—Jai Singhpur—Bakar Khud—Rawal Sar—A floating island—A Buddhist shrine—Mandi—Its princes—Satti pillars

You must go north from the Punjab if you want to find *The Realm of the Gods*—the old, old Gods of the hills. You must go north to the great mountains, where the five rivers take their rise, beneath the melting snows. The Punjab has been the track of nearly all invading armies, which have one by one left their mark on the people of India. Up in the hills, these invasions have influenced folk less. There, old customs, old beliefs, old prejudices, all nearly as ancient as the ice worn rocks, still prevail, untouched by the progress of civilization. There the Brahmans still retain all their former power. Lamas look calmly down from the monastery roof over the high stony mountains. That is the home where the old, simple deities still inhabit trees, rocks, lakes and peaks, just as they have always done since man first came four

thousand years ago, and invaded the realm of the Gods.

It was in the second week of April 1911 that we escaped into the heart of the hills. Jugan Singh, my Dogra orderly, would show me his wonderful land of Kangra. And so it came about that the Punjab mail cast us out on Jullundur platform, with Gharry, my dog companion of many a march, and with tents, *yakduns* and other carefully selected camping equipment, for a six hundred mile journey through the hills.

It is a twenty-five mile drive to Hoshiarpur. The country beyond Jullundur looked very peaceful in the late evening. Dust and smoke lay low and blue over the ripe cornfields as we drove along. Peacocks strutted about looking for a night's lodging in the high trees. Buffaloes waded into cool tanks. And the road was the road surely which Kim and the Lama followed—dusty and shisham-lined, with bullock carts crawling slowly along. There was the Jat, and there the woman from Kulu. But I looked in vain for the good Lama amongst the unclean and truculent groups of Sadus.

Beyond Hoshiarpur the road is hot and dusty, and the hills are covered with only the scantiest shrubs. The only redeeming features of this ugly scenery were the mighty ranges of the Himalayas ahead, which looked tantalizingly cool. The low Gitar hills, over which we now toiled, are subject to visits from dacoits from time to time. No north-west frontier hills could look more unattractive. We met many carts with roofs rigged up over them, carrying whole families to Jawala Mukhi, which is a great place of

pilgrimage in April. Several jets of gas issue from the rocks at Jawala Mukhi, and over these a handsome temple has been built in which the *bojki*s, or priests, keep the gas vapours burning. As they go forward, the pilgrims cry "*Bolo Jawala Mukhi ki jai*" (Victory to the fiery mouthed), "*Bolo laten wala ki jai.*" *Jai** (Victory) is a word whose meaning it is important to understand when travelling through the Dogra country. It is applied as a term of respect to the highest classes of Rajputs, who are consequently known as '*Jaikaris*,' or those entitled to the '*Jai*.' I will give some further details of its use a little later on.

Travelling in Kangra is expensive. The rates for transport are high, and the distances of the established marches are short. An easy fourteen miles is counted as a double march, and consequently you must pay double rates. Yet strange to say the pony men are not very anxious to engage even upon such lucrative terms. I have no doubt but that there is very good reason for their hesitation, and that they do not actually pocket the whole of their wages. In two places the local officials were anxious that payment might be made through them, to enable them to collect their *dasturi*, or commission, to which they are entitled by regulations. The system by which local officials are allowed to take a fee from pony-men is a very unfair one, and discourages the latter from seeking work.

These early marches were exceedingly hot. When-

*This too is what Dogra sepoy's shout when the regiment is on the line of march. Another Dogra cry is "*Ramchanda ji ki jai.*"

ever possible, I travelled in the mornings and evenings, passing the heat of the day under a pipal tree. But the flies were insufferable. It took three days to cross the outer ranges and to reach Dera Gopipa, which is on the Beas river, and is, if anything, lower and hotter even than Hoshiarpur. April is not the best season for travelling in Kangra. In addition to the heat, there are other troubles. The whole population is too busy cutting its abundant crops to think about the wants of travellers. Consequently, it is difficult to get coolies or ponies, and progress is one long struggle with unwilling natives. Also the pipal trees, upon which one relies to a great extent for protection against the sun, shed all their leaves at this period, and this I soon found to be a serious inconvenience, as the pipal are the biggest as well as the commonest trees in Kangra. At other seasons they afford splendid shelter to camp under. Besides the pipal, there are great quantities of mangoes and a few banian trees. The mangoes, which gave vast quantities of fruit the previous year, were producing none at all this: and the natives said that this always occurred in those years when the trees threw out new sprigs, as they were doing now. The mango crop of the following summer of 1912 was again an exceptionally rich one. April, too, corresponds with the Hindu month of *Baisakh*, which is the most auspicious season for marriages. We met at least a couple of wedding processions on every march. The bridegroom, often a little fellow only ten or twelve years old, is dressed in red and gold and is carried off in a silken *dandy*, or chair, to the house

of his bride. There are musicians who go on before, and who beat loudly on the *duffla*, or *dhol*-shaped drum. Another kind of drum used in Kangra is the *kanru*, a hemispherical kettle-drum, which has a crisp roll : and at the weddings of rich people you may see the *nigara*, which is carried on the back of one man and beaten by another.

The rules for marriage are very curious amongst the Dogras. A man may not marry into his own clan at all. Thus a Katoch may not marry a Katoch girl. This law extends even to the lowest classes. A man may marry his own social equal, or a little below him. A woman may marry her own social equal, but *must* otherwise marry above her. Hence a proverb, "In seven generations the low class Rathi's daughter becomes a queen". Consequently it is very difficult to find husbands for the highest classes of Rajput girls, and amongst these families it is said that female infanticide is even now practiced if an opportunity arises. Child-marriages are the general rule, but still a large number of men marry for the first time between the ages of 20 and 40. It is not uncommon for girls of 15 and 16 to be mothers.

The marriage customs of the Dogras are worth studying for several reasons. Firstly, it should be understood that certain seasons are particularly favourable. The month of *Baisakh* is the chief of these. A traveller at this season finds the whole population getting married, and there is no one left to carry his baggage. Secondly, ignorance of their peculiar marriage laws, may lead army officers into committing

grave injustice by refusing a sepoy's application for leave of absence. Kangra is off the great rail routes of the Punjab. Old customs and superstitions cling. The Brahman is a power in the land, and he exercises his rights in the most autocratic manner. The family Brahman settles a lucky time for the marriage. When the stars and horoscope have decided in favour of a certain day and hour for the wedding, nothing on earth, except perhaps hard cash into the Brahman's pockets, can alter the date. If the bridegroom cannot be married at that time, the ceremony may be delayed months, perhaps years, before the stars are again favourable; and sometimes the match may be broken off altogether. So, in dealing with urgent applications for leave, a good deal of latitude should be allowed.

Even the recent Sikh marriage of the Tikka Sahib of Kapurthala, had to be celebrated at the inconvenient but lucky hour of 7 o'clock in the morning, and it was only after considerable trouble that his father, the Maharajah, prevented the ceremony taking place at 4 a.m., the time first selected by the priests. It is therefore easy to understand how unbending the *parohits*, or priests, can be towards poor people, who cannot afford to pay for costly dispensations. I have no hesitation in saying that many officers would be horrified if they knew the unhappiness they were responsible for by having refused leave to their Dogra sepoys on occasions.

Marriage consists of three periods. First comes the *kurmia* or betrothal, when the match having been

arranged, the bridegroom, often quite a child, takes a jewel or a bangle to the girl. Amongst the higher class Dogras, no money transaction takes place, and in such cases the betrothal is called *dharam*. Amongst Thakurs and Rathis, who are low class Dogras, money presents are usually made. In certain instances a very curious exchange system is employed, known as the *Batta Satta ka Natha*. A. gives a daughter in marriage to the son of B; B's daughter marries C's son, and C's daughter marries A's son. Any hitch in a triple marriage of this sort such, for example, as leave being refused to a sepoy, upsets all three marriages. The old Bible method, by which a young fellow worked for so many years in the house of the bride's father, is sometimes employed.

The second period of marriage is the *Beeha Shadi*. This is the actual marriage. In some instances the bridegroom is invested with the *janeo*, or sacred thread, at the same time, so as to save the expense of a separate ceremony. At the *Beeha* the bridegroom is dressed in red, and a *sarah*, or veil, is tied over his face. I have attended a wedding where the *sarah* was made of strings of pearls which must have been exceedingly valuable; but in the case of poor people, a few strands of gold tinsel suffice. The bridegroom is carried in a *takht-i-rawan*, or travelling throne to the bride's house, and the ceremony there enacted by the Brahmans, concludes with the tying together of the garments of the young couple, and with their walking hand in hand round a sacred mangoe wood fire. The bridegroom then takes

the bride to his home, invariably sending her on a few yards ahead of him. A few days later she returns to her own home again.

The third and last period is the *mukhlawa*, when the bride is finally taken to her husband's home and begins to live with him. Kangra is much more un-get-at-able than most people suppose, and it is quite a saying amongst Dogra sepoys that the worst punishment a commanding officer can inflict is to give a sepoy fifteen days leave. It means that most of that time he is travelling hard under a hot sun ; and even if he is to be married, he has to hurry away again after only four or five days in his home. I noticed that in class Dogra regiments, whose officers naturally know more about Dogras than do officers of other corps, a special system of long periods of leave has been adopted.

Everywhere in Kangra there are wayside shops for the refreshment of tired travellers. More important still are the drinking places, which the charity of rich and pious people have provided. At the driest parts of the march, under the shade of some seductive tree, a servant of the local Raja, or *khan-dan*, keeps cool water always ready in jars. A stone tank, with steps leading to the water, is built round every spring. Some of these water troughs are of great age. They are met with every few hundred yards all along the road. Many, however, are now overgrown with jungle, and the water in them is stagnant. The glory of Kangra is its pipal trees, which are very numerous. There is nearly always a handsome stone platform

built round their bases for travellers to rest upon. In fact, everything has been done to alleviate the trials of a hot and weary journey. There are bungalows at Gagret, Barwain, Dera Gopipa, Baroli, and Tira Sujanpur. The Dogra villages are, as a rule, widespread. Each landowner lives isolated upon his own estate, so that, if he is a high-class Rajput, he can provide proper seclusion for his women. Refuse and filth are never found close by. The houses are double storied and usually thatched; but at least thirty per cent are neatly roofed with slate. They are constantly *lepaied*, or plastered, and have an appearance of solidity and trimness that is to be seen nowhere else in the Himalayas. Certainly, the Dogras live up to their reputation for cleanliness. The slate they use for roofing, comes from near Dharamsala, where it is quarried for about Rs. 8 per hundred slabs. The cost of carting sends the price up to about Rs. 18 per hundred slabs in the more remote parts of Kangra.

Though latent powers must exist in the bosom of the Kangra hills, there is very little on the surface to indicate their presence. The terrible Kangra earthquake of 1905 is still fresh in everyone's mind, and traces of it are to be seen in all the villages. The people talk of it with horror. Then at Jawala Mukhi, as has been already mentioned, inflammable gas issues from the rocks; and at certain places in Kulu there are springs so hot, that rice can be cooked in the water.

On arrival at the Beas river, we crossed by ferry to the small town of Dera Gopipa. So far the hills had

been most insignificant, but beyond this point they became bigger, and the scenery began to improve. The Dogra, who is so secretive when you meet him down in the Punjab, becomes more communicative as soon as you get him in his own native hills. Indeed, when he discovers that you are inclined to be friendly, and are not the type of *sahib* who hustles, he will open his innermost mind, and you will find him then full of the quaintest beliefs and superstitions. For example, in Kangra, the land is supposed to sleep on certain days, and no ploughing must then take place. It is lucky to march north on a Thursday. It is desperately unlucky to start a march on the fourth or eighth day of the moon. It is unlucky to plough in the month of *jeth*, (probably because it is uncomfortably hot then). It is very unlucky to mention the names of certain places such as, for example, Kangra, before the morning meal or morning prayer. If you mention those names you will probably miss a meal, or something equally unlucky will happen. The river Beas, they say, was produced by Shiva, at the request of a holy man. You must not eat the meat of he-goats or rams. Marriages must take place on odd days of the month *i.e.* on the 7th 15th or 23rd. The 18th of the month is, however, an exception, and is an auspicious day. It is unlucky if a cow gives birth to its first calf in the month of *Magh*, or if a child is born in *Katak*. A child's destiny is decided on the sixth night of its life, and so the whole family sits up to watch over it. A child born ill-formed about the head is an unlucky omen, but other deformities are not unlucky. A man

must not die in his bed, but must be lifted on to the ground. This is carried out even in regimental hospitals, and medical officers, hurriedly summoned, will find the patient on the floor, if it seems probable that he is dying. Onions are unclean. Carrots may not be eaten because the *ga* of the word *gai* (cow) occurs in the word *gajar* (a carrot). In fact some rule or superstition regulates every action of a man's daily life.

Dera Gopipa has a post office and a *tahsil*. Its elevation is only 1,400 feet, while Bharwain at the top of the outer ridge is about 3,900 feet above sea level. These altitudes will give some idea of the insignificance of the Kangra hills. Dera Gopipa is picturesquely situated on a cliff overhanging the Beas. Its one important street is paved with stone; and a broad flight of stairs leads down to the river, to the place where the ferry boat crosses. There is a fine stone temple to Krishna, called the Thakar Dwara; and another and older shrine is dedicated to Devi, or Goddess worship. Outside this temple of Devi, the monkey god, Hanuman, and the elephant headed Ganesh stand sentry by the door.

One of my objects in undertaking this journey through Kangra was to make a study of Hinduism and Animism as they exist in the hills, untainted as yet by modern innovations. I found Kangra and Kulu to be a regular realm of small gods. Ganesh is the god of fortune, who regulates good or bad luck. He is a grotesque red figure, with a short fat body and an elephant's head, and is always believed to be rather

a humorous god. A story is told that once Parbathi became annoyed with her husband Shiva, and went off to the woods to live by herself in a cave. She created a son from her own sweat, and called him Ganesh. One day Shiva came through the woods looking for Parbathi his lost wife. Ganesh refused the god entrance to the cave, and in his anger Shiva slew him and cut off his head. Parbathi was greatly distressed at the death of her son, and refused to be reconciled to Shiva till he had restored Ganesh to life. So Shiva sent for another child. However only a baby elephant could be found. So Shiva cut off its head, and placing it on Ganesh's shoulders, brought him to life again.

Now all the gods collected to decide which of Shiva's four sons should have rule over the rest. They settled the question by arranging a race between the sons for stones in the jungle. They all said that Ganesh, with his huge elephant's head, could never possibly be first. But Ganesh dashed off after his stone, picked up the first pebble he saw in the jungle, ran back before all the others, and claimed to have won the race. So he has the *raj*, or rule over the rest. And because he stood at the entrance of Parbathi's cave, he always guards the door of Hindu goddesses still. You will see him standing at the gate of any temple of Parbathi.

The story goes on that the gods were dissatisfied at the fate of the poor baby elephant, whose head was cut off and given to Ganesh. "What about the baby elephant?" they said.

So to quiet them, Shiva cut off a fish's head and

put it on to the elephant's body.

"But what about the poor fish?" said the gods.

Shiva cut off a crab's head and gave it to the fish.

"But what about the poor crab?" cried the gods.

"Oh! bother the crab" said Shiva, flying into a rage;
"let it live without a head".

So that is why crabs have no heads.*

Hanuman, the monkey-faced god, who, according to the epic poem *Ramayana*, helped Rama to recover his stolen wife Sita from Ravan, king of Lanka (Ceylon), is much revered in Kangra.

Many temples are dedicated to Rama and Sita, and of course images of Hanuman are always found somewhere about the building.

Mata is the goddess of plague and small-pox

Dandi Bhairon, or Dandion ka deota, is the god of fever, and is one of the most conspicuous deities of Kangra. The reader will already have noticed that the minor gods of the Hindu Pantheon are given greater prominence than the more important ones, such as Shiva, Krishna or Brahma. This is because we are off the beaten track. Indeed, the border line between orthodox Hinduism and Animism in these hills is often very ill defined. When we come to the uplands of Kulu it will be seen that the god of such a tree, or such and such a shrine, or the spirit of such and such a peak is the *supreme* deity in its own particular locality.

* I have seen crabs in Kohat on the N. W. Frontier and in Jammu, and also in Kasauli, at a height of 5,000 feet above sea level.

Dandi Bhairon, as I have said, is the god of fever ; and since malarial fevers are common in Kangra, he is much respected. His image is found under pipal trees. He is supposed to be very fond of sticks. Offerings of small wooden pegs are consequently found hanging beside him.

The march from Dera Gopipa to Jawala Mukhi was most interesting, and the scenery had improved a little. Beyond the low Kangra hills, rose a magnificent range of peaks known as the Dhaola Dhar. But these snows were lifted so abruptly and so dazzlingly to the height of 16,000 feet, that they seemed only to accentuate the insignificance of the Kangra hills. Perhaps this was because I had always imagined Kangra to be a good deal more elevated than it really is.

Images, shrines, temples, tanks, *bowli*-wells, *satti* stones, and ruined fountains were thickly scattered along the whole of the fourteen miles of this march. Further on, at Jawala Mukhi itself, and at innumerable other places also, were little monuments to Baba Balak Nath. Baba Balak Nath, or as he is more commonly called Siddh Droat, was a Brahman saint who once travelled all over Kangra. The centre of his worship is, I believe, in the Hamirpur district. The monument consists of a stone slab, about a foot square, raised on a pedestal. On the slab are carved the footprints of the saint together with his crooked stick. These little slabs are sometimes found in groups of fifty or sixty together beside the road. On a ridge of hills up which we toiled I saw several monuments to women who had become *sattis*.

The mild Dogras appear to see no harm in the practice of *satti*. Perhaps they do not now realise the horror of it. The nearest approach to a *satti* about here occurred the year before my visit, when a woman managed to die (probably from poison) in time to be burned in the same fire with her dead husband. On a bluff of land above the Beas river near Jai Singhpur, I counted forty-five such monuments all in a line. They were the *satti* stones of the family of the Raja of Lumbagraon.

Jawala Mukhi is a large village situated on a hill-side. Its narrow streets are paved with cobbles. Shrines and images of Ganesh, Hanuman, and Bhairon abound, and every corner is filled with the footprints of Siddh Droat. The town is full of temples, pipal platforms, bulls (Nandi) and graves of departed Sadus. Monkeys and flying foxes are numerous. The Jawala Mukhi temple is the most celebrated shrine in Kangra, and is visited by pilgrims from all parts of India. As already mentioned, the temple is built over a number of jets of burning gas, which issue from the rocks. These are regarded as manifestations of the goddess Durga. The temple stands in a courtyard, with a fine marble pavement, which was presented by the people of Amritsar. Its golden roof was given by Ranjit Singh, and the King of Nepal presented it with a bell. Maharajah Karak Singh gave a pair of silver doors. In a separate place some of the gas collects under water, and makes a little explosion when a match is applied. The story goes that even Akbar the Great worshipped at the shrine after some

of his soldiers were swept away by a neighbouring torrent. The bigot Emperor Aurangzebe is said to have had the place flooded to extinguish the flames, which however, he could not put out.

"*Bolo Jawala Mukhi ki jai*," cry the pilgrims, as they throng the court. A big drum beats to draw attention to the fact that the *Sahib* is about to make his contribution. In the face of such publicity, who can fail to be liberal?

Most of the celebrated Hindu shrines of India have a badge which pilgrims may wear after their visit, as a sign that they have been there. The badge of Jawala Mukhi is a brass bangle with tiger heads meeting. That of Kedarnath is an iron ring. A copper bangle is the sign of Badrinath, a conch shell of Ramesvaram. Pilgrims to the shrine of Krishna at Dwarka are branded. But some of the most important places of pilgrimage, such as Amarnath and Jagga-nath, have no distinctive badge.

After visiting the shrine, we spent the heat of the day under some pipal trees in a ruined and quiet part of the town. The ruins were infested with monkeys who sat in the broken windows, scampered up and down the deserted stairs leading to tanks, or fled in chattering hordes from house to house. Their antics reminded me vividly of Kipling's *Bandar Log* in the City of Cold Lairs. We also watched the flying foxes for a long time through glasses, as they hung head downwards from the trees. They are revolting looking beasts with brown foxy heads and nasty black wings, full of creepy hooks and claws.

The same evening we pushed on a few miles to Baroli, where there is a bungalow overlooking the Beas. With strangers, the Dogras are the most retiring and reticent people imaginable, and it is really difficult to understand them thoroughly. I must confess that what I did learn, did not improve my opinion of them. To begin with, they are bound hand and foot by prejudices and customs which are quite intolerable, and which only a timid race would put up with. Their priests rule them absolutely. Their personal cleanliness, which is a feature one might admire, becomes repugnant because it is carried to such absurd lengths. This is dirty. This is impure. And most impure and dirty of all is the Englishman. Naturally one cannot be expected to agree with the Dogras here. Even if your shadow passes over a dish, the food it contains is polluted, and must be thrown away. The Dogra is, however, pretty quick at measuring just how far he may carry his caste prejudices with each individual Englishman, and it is found in regiments that Dogra sepoy do not give any trouble so long as their prejudices are indulged to a reasonable extent, but no further.

The leading characteristic of the Dogra is his extreme pride of birth and family. In him is found the curious contradiction of a brave soldier and a timid man. Though 'fear' is a word constantly on his lips, he is capable of brave deeds when surrounded by his comrades. He is exceedingly sensitive. If you treat him kindly and humour his prejudices to a reasonable (but not too excessive) degree, there is no more

tractable person in this world. He keenly resents abuse, though it is more than likely he will never show his resentment. Still he feels the pain none the less. The Dogra is honest as a rule, but parsimony is his greatest failing. His religion makes him scrupulously clean in his person. As I have already mentioned, a Dogra village is a pattern of cleanliness. He is often good-looking, with aristocratic features. Nor is this to be wondered at, when one considers that families of the higher Rajput classes are very ancient and pure blooded. Most Dogras profess to be soldiers by trade, and the higher classes will not take up any other employment. Their military achievements are, however, nothing wonderful. Kangra has been overrun by Moguls, Gurkhas and Sikhs, and by any one else who ever wanted to overrun it; and its freedom from further invasion is due more to its remote situation, than to the bravery of its inhabitants.

The Dogra's dress consists of a shirt and a *dhoti*, or loin cloth, which makes the men appear rather naked about the legs. But on swagger occasions they wear tight trousers. A pink coral necklace is often hung round the neck; and when a *pugree* is not worn, a thin muslin pill-box cap takes its place. It is worth noticing that Hindus always fasten the neck of a shirt down the right, and Mussulmans down the left side.

I believe that, strictly speaking, the only true Dogra comes from the *do girath* (two lake) district in Jammu. But all Rajputs who live in the low hilly country between the Chenab and Sutlej rivers, are called Dogras. The *do girath* country is to the east of

Jammu. The Dogra states are Jammu, Chamba, Kangra, Mandi, Kulu, Suket and Kahlur ; but Dogras are also found in small numbers in the states of Badrawar, Kishtiwari, Kashmir and Naoshera, though these latter are mostly Jats and not Rajputs.

The recruiting book divides the Dogra classes as follows :—

(1) Brahmans. (2) Rajputs. (3) Thakurs and Rathis. Though such a division is very broad, it is quite sufficient for ordinary purposes.

Socially, the Brahmans come first. They are the representatives of the gods. A Brahman is born such, and only one man on earth can make or break a Brahman, and that man is the Raja of Mandi. But in this connection I might quote from Dubois' *Hindu Manners and Customs*, in which he says, "A Brahman only becomes a Brahman after the ceremony of the triple thread". Dubois is of course a great authority on Hinduism, but I believe most people would disagree with this statement of his about Brahmans.

The Brahman Dogras may be divided into praying Brahmans and ploughing Brahmans. The plough is an important factor in the social standing of Dogras, as I shall explain later. The praying Brahmans are called Padhas or Parohits, and it is these classes who are the household priests. They officiate too at the shrines of male gods such as Vishnu and Shiva. But as it happens, in Kangra the most important shrines are devoted to the worship of goddesses like Durga and Kali; and in these temples the priests are not Brahmans but Jogis, Chelas and Bojkis.

Of these, the Bojkis are said to be given to all kinds of vice. The attendants of Jawala Mukhi are Bojkis. The fitness of a Dogra Brahman for military service depends entirely on whether he does, or does not, plough. If he ploughs—*i.e.* is not a priest—he is suitable so far as caste is concerned.

But the best recruiting classes are the Rajputs. Of these the *First Class Rajputs* are called "Mains", and when addressed are saluted with the word "Jai" or "Jai Dia". They are therefore called Jaikaris to distinguish them from the lower classes, who are not entitled to the "Jai". The Rajputs are essentially a fighting people, and as such look upon agriculture as beneath them. They resemble, to a very limited degree, the Samurai of Japan. They utterly decline to handle a plough, which they seem to regard as the emblem of husbandry, and there are families who for centuries have never touched a plough. Social degradation from the upper classes is frequently brought about by aristocratic but impoverished families taking to agriculture. Another cause of degradation is disregard of the marriage law which forbids a daughter marrying below her social rank. "Jai" is a most honoured title, and cases have occurred in history where princes have surrendered their thrones, rather than address as "Jai" a more powerful prince, who was not entitled to it. But such obstinacy is characteristic of Dogras. They are terrible sticklers over little points of etiquette. The first result of this pride of family, and this disdain of ploughing, is that the high caste Rajputs are very poor. In the ploughing and reaping

seasons they have to employ lower class men to do their work in the fields. The prejudice is, however, now slowly declining, and large numbers of Rajputs have taken to ploughing, and have thereby descended in the social scale. Numbers too are said to plough secretly by night. The following are some of the most important Rajput tribes:—Katoch, of whom I shall say something more later, Goleria, Jaswal, Kotheria, Jammuwal,—to which belongs His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir,—Chumbial, Pathania (of Pathankot), Dudwal, Sibaya, Mankotia, and several others. To sum up the peculiarities of these high class Rajputs, or as they are sometimes called “first class Rajputs,” their rules of conduct may be tabulated thus:—

- (1) They must never handle a plough.
- (2) They must not give their daughters in marriage to an inferior, nor may the men themselves marry women greatly below them in rank.
- (3) They must accept no money at betrothals.
- (4) Their women must be strictly secluded. For this reason Dogra villages are very scattered, each house being situated by itself in the middle of its owner's fields.

The Second Class Rajputs can only be distinguished from the first by their marriage dealings with their superiors. Thus a first class Rajput will marry a second class Rajput girl, but will not descend to the Thakurs or Rathis. The second class Rajputs are also addressed as *jai* now-a-days, though formerly they used not to be entitled to it. Their lower sections are

still only addressed with "salaam". They are *par excellence* the most soldierly class amongst Dogras, their inclinations and traditions being all military. Besides, since they work hard in the fields most of the year, their physical development is better than that of the more aristocratic and delicately featured Mians. The chief families of this class who live in Kangra are the Ladu, Doddh, Manhus, Samkria, Jarial, Habrol, and a few others.

Thakurs and Rathis are the lower classes of the Rajputs of Jammu and Kangra respectively. These, and all the superior grades already mentioned, wear the *janeo*.* Rathis do, and Thakurs do not, practice the *chadar dalna*, or throwing the sheet, a ceremony by which a man takes to himself the widow of his deceased brother.†

*The *Janeo*, or sacred thread, used only to be worn by Jai-karis, but the right to carry it is now much extended. It is a sign of the "twice born" or Aryan race. It is composed of three strands or threads to represent Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. It is worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm. A *janeo* must be made by a Brahman, and when replaced by a new one after about a month's use, the old one is hung up in the branches of a sacred pipal tree. A sepoy going back from leave to the regiment will take a supply of a half-a-dozen with him. The *janeo* of a Rajput is 95 *chuas* (hands breadths) in length, and that of a Brahman 96.

†The lot of a widow is an exceedingly unhappy one in Kangra. She may not eat meat, nor wear red, nor jewels, nor the *balul* (nose ring) which distinguishes a married woman. Widow re-marriages never occur amongst high class Dogras. As mentioned in the text, Rathis marry the widows of their deceased brothers, and the children of such unions are considered legitimate

As I have already mentioned, we marched on from Jawala Mukhi to Baroli. It was the 21st of April. The next day was one of difficulties—like many and many which followed it. All my pony men ran away unpaid during the night. This was really hardly to be wondered at, since the Tahsildar of Dera had impressed them at the last moment, having done nothing during the three weeks notice I had given him. Still, it left me stranded. It was 10 a.m. before unwilling substitutes were dragged forth. We crossed the river to Nadaun, and when we eventually got to the other bank at a distance of 500 yards from our starting place, it was nearly twelve o'clock, and the sun was blisteringly hot. The Beas at this point is deep and swift. The old ferry boat was a crazy high prowed concern, whose ancient bottom swelled like thin ice beneath the weight of my five laden ponies.

After being nearly roasted alive on the dusty path, I halted for the night by the roadside near Jean, much to the disgust of the pony men, who wished to push on to the delights of Tira Sujanpur bazaar. I now began to learn several things with regard to pony men. First, never lose your temper with Dogras. Secondly, on arrival in camp, quietly sieze all the mule saddles and place one under each of the six legs of your bed. This procedure is met with a howl of protest from the men, who fully intended to bolt during the night without waiting to be paid. Thirdly, having secured this vantage, pay the men. That pacifies them, and they all go off grumbling to the

bazaar to spend the money, and soon forget your brutality. If the local officials did their duty properly, there would be no need for these unpleasant methods.

Tira Sujampur is a large town scattered round a level, grassy plain of several acres extent. We passed through the bazaar and sat beside the road overlooking the Beas, and had breakfast while the baggage ponies came up. Then we crossed the river by a ferry and walked to Lambagraon. The natives cross the Beas at all points on inflated buffalo skins. The animals seem to have been scooped out of their skins from the tail-end, and so there is very little stitching required. The ferryman lies across the skin and propels himself with a paddle, and by moving his legs sideways. A passenger with luggage can easily be carried. The skin rafts are called *davaïs* here, and put one in mind of the little goat skin rafts of Baltistan called *zaks*, upon which one nervously crosses the angry waters of the Indus at Skardu or Khapalu.

At Lambagraon I called on Raja Jai Chand, who owns a large *jagir* there, and who, as Honorary Major of the 37th Dogras, has earned two medals in Chitral and the Black Mountain. I found him a charming gentleman, with a large fund of knowledge about his native hills. He is a personality of considerable interest, since he is the head of the Katoch tribe, the oldest family of Dogras in Kangra, who trace their origin back through two thousand years to the very gods themselves. The Katoch chiefs ruled the kingdom of Jullundur, and are mentioned by the Chinese traveller,



RAJA JAI CHAND OF LUMBAGRAON.

Hiuen Tsiang in the seventh century A. D. The story of how the Raja came into his *jagir* is worth recording. His branch are cadets, but Raja Anrud Chand, the head of the senior branch, fled to Hardwar, rather than consent to marry his daughter to Dhian Singh, the famous Minister of Ranjit Singh. Dhian Singh, who desired to gain social standing by a Katoch alliance, held the gift of a *jagir* for Rs. 35,000, and this he subsequently gave to the cadet branch in return for a bride. So the *jagir* has descended to the present Raja. The action of Anrud Singh in forsaking throne, country, and wealth, rather than contaminate his blood, is an excellent example of the extreme pride of family which is not one whit diminished to-day.

The Katoch were later driven into the hills, where they ruled Kangra and many of the adjoining states. Through the centuries they seem to have been left alone in their remote hills.

Twice Mohammedan armies ravaged Kangra under Mahmud of Ghazni. The fabulous stories told of the wealth of the temple of Jawala Mukhi and of the fortress of Kot Kangra, seem to have been the attraction. The invaders, however, did not stay long. The Mogul rule was never oppressive, except under Aurangzebe. Akbar treated the Dogras well. A terrible Gurkha invasion is spoken of with horror to this day. To combat it, the Dogras asked help of Ranjit Singh, who, when he had driven out the Gurkhas, himself took possession. The Katoch chiefs resisted British occupation when we took over the Sikh Empire, and many of them were deported. But the branch

from which the present Raja of Lumbagraon is descended was confirmed in its *jagir*, which it still enjoys.

Jugan Singh, my orderly, lived at Jai Singhpur, which is only three miles beyond Lumbagraon. Several other sepoyes of my own regiment were on leave and furlough there too, so I remained three days on the village green of Jai Singhpur, where I found myself in the heart of the recruiting district. Many sepoyes came to see me, bringing with them little gifts of eggs, butter and honey. Recruits too, who mistook me for the Recruiting Officer, were plentiful. I noticed, on the backs of most of the lads I examined, scars made by blood-letting, which is supposed to relieve fevers. All the young fellows now-a-days are vaccinated, but in the case of the older men a scar is always to be found on the wrist. This was caused by inoculation from a human patient suffering from small-pox, and was done in former days by the native *hakims*, or doctors. I was interested to see this, as nearly every Pathan and Wazir, coming down to the Punjab from the fastnesses beyond our North-West Frontier, has a similar inoculation mark on the wrist. Hindus as a rule do not care to be treated when suffering from small-pox, which they call *mata bimari*, "the illness of the mother." "Hush", they will say to quiet the children, "the mother is in the house".

Jai Singhpur lies on bluffs which rise precipitously two hundred feet above the waters of the Beas, and I was told that these same cliffs had often been used by suicides. I heard a sad story of a suicide which oc-

cured on the morning of the great earthquake of April 1905. Three brothers, all native officers in Dogra regiments, had come home on short leave to attend the marriage of their younger brother. Their old mother rose early on the morning after their arrival and went outside the house, thus escaping the ruin which killed all her four sons a few moments later when the earthquake shook down every building. The poor old lady, seeing her family crushed to death, ran to the cliffs and threw herself over into the depths of the Beas.

While strolling along the crest of these cliffs, I killed a whippy little snake about nine inches long, which was said to be most deadly. It had a small black head and a greeny-brown body, and I was told it was the female of its species.

After a rest at Jai Singhpur, I decided to make my way by the lower route to Mandi. There is also an upper route which leads more directly to the Kulu valley. We proceeded up the bank of the river for another four miles, and then crossed the Beas for the fourth time at a ferry. Where we landed, a valley runs up into the hills at right-angles to the Beas. Very soon this develops into a defile, half a mile wide, with high conglomerate cliffs and a stony bottom. This infernal defile (I cannot find any other word to describe it) rejoices in the name of the Bakar Khud. We followed it for thirteen weary miles. There was no path. We just stepped from stone to stone, or walked over heavy shingle. The sun beat down upon us fiercely, and each bend brought a fresh vista of the khud, exactly similar to the one we had just struggled over. Luckily there

was a good stream of water. We crossed it every few minutes. We spent the heat of the day, in a delightful oasis of trees, and then went on again at 3 P.M. It was dusk when we came out on to a ridge called Oh ! Devi. It is so named because, travellers cry "Oh !" when at last they see the welcome landmark. All day we passed *Gadis*, who were taking their goats and sheep up to the snows for the summer. The *Gadis* are shepherds, and are distinct from *Gujars*, whose flocks consist of cattle. The *Gadis* are divided into tribes of which the *Kanets*, are the chief. I believe they pay Government a yearly tax of Rs. 2 per hundred head of sheep, but in return receive payment from villagers for halting on the fields, which greatly benefit by the goats manure. A *zamindar*, or landowner, will pay three or four rupees for a large flock to spend a night on his fields. The *Gadis* wear a sort of grey felt shirt, with a rope belt round the waist. In the pouch of their shirts they carry a weird collection of pipes, lamps, cooking pots and so on.

As I say, it was dusk when we reached Oh ! Devi. An old woman lived there who was paid by some kind villager to give cold water to exhausted travellers. I have already made mention of this form of charity. This old lady received a rupee a month. On another hill pass, the servant got her daily food from a pious *Khatri*. Oh ! the fierce delight of drinking that icy water. "A cup of cold water given in My name ;" said Our Lord ; and He had travelled in thirsty lands Himself, and knew what an icy cup of water was to a parched throat. Who knows ! He may even have

accepted such hospitality on the Kangra Hills. There are strange traditions of His wanderings over India during His youth, and of His eventually escaping from the Cross to return and die and be buried in Srinagar. But these are vexed problems, upon which I will not here venture an opinion. It was long after dark when we got to Chukama. Too weary to pitch camp, I threw my bedding on the ground and slept under the stars, while my followers got a wedding dinner at a local marriage feast. There were marriages everywhere that day, for it was the fourteenth of Baisakh; a lucky even number day. The thrum of the *duffla* and *nigara* drum was heard even in the wilds of the Bakar Khud, for there were villages hidden away in the hills above it.

We had now reached the State of Mandi. We made an early start the next morning and breakfasted by the wayside at the pretty little village of Gopalpur. The march presented a succession of climbs, and often the road was paved for several miles with rough uneven stones, which were difficult to walk over. These cobbled roads are the work of ancient kings. Near the top of the last rise above Rawal Sar we came upon a beautiful fountain, built by one of the Rajahs of Mandi. There was a domed roof over the pool, and a stone court in front of it. The delicate arches at the entrance were supported on pillars. A rill of purest water flowed into the stone basin through a tiger's mouth. The tiger's head was wreathed in maiden-hair. A few little fishes and some crabs moved over

the floor of the tank. The recollection of that spring will always be a pleasure to me, for I was quite exhausted when I suddenly discovered it.

At the very top of the ridge, or pass, several little sandals and wooden clogs were placed, together with an idol, on a rough altar at the foot of a pine tree of unusual size, which was the home of a godling. It is easy to sympathize with such superstitions, and to almost believe oneself in the spirits of the great pines. The Druids worshipped the oak; Burmans offer grain to the djinns and nats of great trees; the Brahmans of Chamba treat the pipal trees as gods, who must be fed and watered. Even the Japanese believe that the spirits of their honourable dead return to beautiful places. Surely we too are aware that ghostly spirits haunt the pine clad hill sides of the Himalayas. You can hear them whisper among the breeze-blown trees. They are incarnate perhaps in the butterflies that hover in hundreds over some forest pool.

Rawal Sar is a small circular lake about three quarters of a mile in diameter, nestling amongst high bare hills. Its edges are covered with turf and trees, which afford good camps; though a belt of reeds rather shuts out the view of the lake. The place is pretty and attractive, and is besides possessed of some unexpected interests. For one thing an island of reeds with a large tree growing upon it, floats about free, driven hither and thither in the breezes. I saw it cross the lake. The tree is hung with flags, and the Brahman *parohits*, or priests, who for eighty years have

collected the signatures of travellers, say that the island has always floated about ever since they can remember * At one end of the lake are several Hindu shrines, most of which were much damaged in the earthquake of 1905, many being completely thrown down. There is a Thakur Dwara (a shrine of Krishna), and a Shiva Dwara (temple of Shivajee). Down by the lake there are ruins, and a stone *ghat*† with a pedestal, round which a cobra is coiled. There are other pedestals which hold the sacred *tulsi* plant. Hundreds of fish come to the steps to fight for food. But the complete surprise is a real live Buddhist *lamaserai*, one of the very few purely Buddhist shrines now existing in India, which is the ancient home of Buddhism. Why Rawal Sar should be sacred to the Buddhists I could not find out, but it is for some reason very holy ; and a big festival and pilgrimage is held there every winter At that time Buddhist pilgrims from Ladakh and Tibet walk in procession round the lake, and many of them measure their length daily round it by successive prostrations, just as they do round Lhasa. A wall surrounds the lake, and this must be kept on the right hand side. This wall is a regular *prayer wall* and is covered with long inscriptions, of which the *Om mane padmi om* (oh,

* Floating islands formed of matted weeds are so common on the Nile that they sometimes obstruct navigation. The famed floating gardens of Kashmir are made of matted weeds, upon which earth is laid.

† A *ghat* is a landing place by river or lake.

thou jewel in the lotus) is conspicuous.* There are also several carved images of the divine Buddha. The *gompa*, or monastery, is kept by red lamas, sent for the purpose from Lhassa.† Outside, long streamers of prayer flags flutter from a high pole. You were transferred in an instant to Tibet. Inside the temple were all the fittings of a *gompa*, or Tibetan lamaserai—calm figures of the Lord Buddha, many armed statues of *Chan-ra-zik*, horrible blue *devi* demons, butter lamps burning dimly on the altar before the images, painted scrolls hanging from the walls, and books, bound in wooden slips, reposing in pigeon-holes. Most remarkable of all was a huge bronze prayer wheel, standing six feet high. It had all the sacred symbols such as the gordian knot, the wheel of life, the umbrella of royalty, the fish of luck, and the conch shell, handsomely embossed upon it in brass. The lamas sat in the porch, lazily twirling their wheels. Evidently the *gompa* was well off; and being built mostly of wood had not suffered from the earthquake like the solid Hindu shrines. None could say why Rawal Sar is sacred alike to the Buddhists and Hindus. The solution possibly lies in the fact that the temples of both religions are erected to one and the same being, though their respective priests, who are very ignorant, probably do not know it. The Thakur Dwara

* The figures on the cover of this book illustrate the *om mane padmi om* inscriptions, as found on many millions of carved stones in Tibet.

† The bulk of Tibetan lamas belong to the yellow order, those of Ladakh being red robed.

is dedicated to Krishna who is the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. The Lord Buddha was himself (according to Hindu mythology) the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. Thus Krishna and Buddha are one and the same, though they appeared at different times.*

It is not uncommon to find the same places held sacred by both Hindus and Mussulmans—as for examples:—the shrine of Bawa Fattu in Kangra, or the Ziarat on the Takht-i-Suliman in Waziristan. It is then all the more surprising that there are not many more places of common interest to Hindus and Buddhists, whose religions are so closely allied.

Mandi, which we reached on the following day, is a picturesque town, especially in the quiet light of the evening, when the sun has gone down. The place is low and rather hot in April. It is situated amongst hills on the left bank of the Beas. Its

* Sir Edwin Arnold in his *Indian Song of Songs* makes the following reference to the various incarnations of Vishnu:—

- "Fish ! that didst outswim the flood ;
- "Tortoise ! where on earth hath stood ;
- "Boar ! who with thy tusk held'st high
- "The world, that mortals might not die ;
- "Lion ! who hast giants torn ;
- "Dwarf ! who laugh'dst a king to scorn ;
- "Sole subduer of the dreaded !
- "Slayer of the many-headed !
- "Mighty ploughman ! (*ie Krishna*) teacher tender ! (*Buddha*)
- "Of thine own the sure defender !
- "Under all thy ten disguises
- "Endless praise to thee arises.

In the second paragraph of chapter IV, I point out that the word "Baramulla" has reference to Vishnu's incarnation as a boar, which Sir Edwin Arnold has placed third on the list of disguises.

main market place is large and roomy, and is lit with electricity. All its streets are paved, and there is a remarkable absence of those stench and litter which usually pervade a native bazaar. Water is laid on in pipes everywhere. Close to the market place there is a tank where a previous Raja beheaded one of his enemies. A stone pedestal now stands in the water to mark the spot, and a light burns there all night. Stone pigeon houses stand in the streets. Down by the river there are many old temples. Flights of steps lead to the water, between ridges of black rock, which protrude into the stream. A fine suspension bridge, built in 1877, spans the Beas. Mandi has an air of comfort and prosperity. The people both here and throughout Kangra are almost abject in their salutations. They always, when *salaaming*, join their hands, and often touch the ground. I suppose it is a happy survival of good manners, which was once the general custom of India. The inhabitants appear quiet and contented, and there were no traces of the violence and insurrection which had disturbed the peace of Mandi only one year before.

The ruling families of these hill states possess surnames of great antiquity. The Lumbagraon chiefs are always called Chand. The Maharajahs of Jammu are Singh. The Rajas of Mandi are Sen. The Mandi Rajas appear to have been fine fellows at one period.

At the time of my visit Raja Bawani Sen had to be assisted in his affairs by the Tikka Sahib of Kotliar. He succeeded to the *gadi* * while still a boy in 1902.

* The 'gadi,' or 'cushion,' is the same thing as 'throne.'

He was invested with full powers in 1905, but his character never recovered the damage done by a faulty education. Considerable discontent was felt by the *ryots*, or peasants, who suffered oppression from the native officials; and in 1909 there was a serious rising, with which the unhappy Raja was incapable of dealing. It was only put down after the arrival of troops from Simla. It was then that Tikka Sahib Rajendra Pal of Kotlier was sent to Mandi to restore order. Raja Bawani Sen, the unhappy scion of a once noble house, died without heir in February 1912 a few months after my visit. He was about 24 years old, and had ruled ingloriously for about 9 years.

According to the accepted genealogy of the Mandi and Suket families, the real founder of the house appears to have been Vira Sena, who was the first to bear the title of Sen. From Vira Sena down to Samudra Sena there were sixteen generations. Samudra Sena's date has been fixed at A. D. 1527, from an inscription on an old copper plate. The chief of this ancient royal family of Mandi has the distinction of being the only man in the world who can make or break a Brahman.

In the deep pools of the Beas river near the town, great *mahseer* collect. These fish are said to be the spirits of the departed princesses of the royal house of Mandi.

Just outside the town I noticed a collection of carved upright slabs of stone, which are the Satti monuments of the dead Rajas. Some of the pillars were about eight feet high. The following description of them is given by Cunningham, in Volume XIV of his Archaeological Report of 1878.

He says—"The Satti pillars of the Mandi Rajas
 "and their families are single upright stones, standing
 "in a picturesque group on the side of the road to the
 "south of the town leading towards Sukhet and Bilas-
 "pur. Some of them are six and seven feet in height,
 "and all of them are covered with figures of the Rajas,
 "and of the women who were burned with them.
 "Each Raja is represented seated, with a row of
 "ranis, or queens, immediately below. Still lower
 "are rows of standing figures of *khwasis*, or concubines,
 "and *rekalis*, or slave girls. Each of the principal mon-
 "uments bears an inscription in hill Nagari charac-
 "ters (which are the same as the Gupta letters) stating
 "the date of the Raja's decease, and the number of
 "queens, concubines and slave girls who attended him
 "in death. On the pillars attributed to Kesava Sena
 "and Gora Sena there are no inscriptions, but the
 "number of Sattis figured is thirty on the former and
 "twenty four on the latter. Altogether the number
 "of Sattis as figured on the pillars of ten Rajas, is two
 "hundred and fifty two. It makes one shudder to
 "think of the number of helpless women who have
 "suffered a cruel death on this little spot of ground."

The traveller Vigne who visited Mandi in about 1837 also gives a description of these stones. During his stay in Mandi he witnessed a Satti. He say—

"In about half an hour the preparations were com-
 "pleted. She (the widow) was regularly thatched in,
 "upon the top of the funeral pile, whilst her husband's
 "body yet lay outside. It was finally lifted up to
 "her ; the head, as usual was received upon her lap ;

“the fire was applied in different parts; and all was
“so quickly enveloped in a shroud of mingled flame
“and smoke that I believe her sufferings to have been
“of very short duration, as she must almost immedi-
“ately have been suffocated.”

I reached Mandi on the 27th of April and remained there two days.

G H A R R Y .

Love is a thing which is strangely wrought.
Some people tell us it can't be bought.
But purchase a dog for a few rupees,
And love will follow as soon as you please ;
—Love that is pure and good and true,
Which a dog is willing to render you.

The god you enshrine has a cold, wet nose,
A restless tail, which cannot repose.
His spirit pours out through his brown, bright eyes.
His heart he gives you until he dies.
His passion consumes him through and through,
And he gives the whole of himself to you.

The long, hot days of your work he shares.
In holiday time in ecstasy tears
Over the paths that climb the hills.
At the sight of a pony and gun he thrills
With a sympathy warm and bright and true,
Which he gives, completely gives, to you.

His happiness hangs on your every whim,
You are all in all in the world to him.
For nobody else a jot he cares ;
Nobody else your worship shares.
Such is the loyalty, pure and true,
That a dog is willing to render you.

At last, when the thread is cut by Death,
When friendship snaps with his parting breath,
His glazing eyes in their mute distress
Find their comfort in your caress.
When grief has pierced you through and through
You will find his memory soothing you.

CHAPTER II.

KULU.

Up when the grey dawn is filling the skies,
And the servants and muleteers rubbing their eyes,
Away ere the sun down the mountains can creep,
While the soft mist still lingers on cedar-clad steep,
All on the road to Kulu.

Reading the story of Time in the rocks,
The water-hewn valleys, the ice carried blocks,
The gleam of the marble, pure white as the snow,
That tells of some ancient and igneous throe,
All on the road to Kulu.

The sweet rippling sound of the clear mountain streams,
That brighten our march and accompany our dreams,
The scent of the pine-wood, the sight of the snow—
These are but few of the joys that we know,
All on the road to Kulu

"A Song of a Two Months' Leave."

The Dulchi Pass—Lahoulis—Hot springs—An old Pathan—
Faithful servants—Three hundred and sixty Gods—Sultanpur—
Hill temples—Devis and Devtas—Ghapon and Jamlu—Malana—
Trials by ordeal—The Kulu Valley—A waterfall—Nagar—
Sport—Manali—Trout breeding—Merino rams—Kulu châteaux—
Kulu women—Kanets and Kolis—Forest laws—Grazing rights
—Climate—European settlers—Rala—The Rohtang Pass.

We left Mandi on the 30th of April, and set out for Kulu. It was encouraging to see the mountains rising to a greater height ahead, and to know that the heat and burden of the journey was over. It was with keen

pleasure that we looked forward to the cool breezes and snowy peaks of Kulu; for Kangra, and even Mandi, had been a good deal hotter than I had expected.

We halted for the night at Katola; and on the following morning ascended the Dulchi pass. The road was excellent—the best we had been on since leaving Dera Gopipa, for it should be explained that the route we have followed from Kangra into Mandi by way of the Bakar Khud is quite a side track.

Near the top of the Dulchi there is a fine rhododendron forest, whose scarlet flowers were still making a great display of colour. The natives gather the blossoms and make a sort of chutney of them by crushing them and adding salt and red pepper. The Dulchi, I suppose, is only about 5,000 feet. At the top I had breakfast in a lovely spot called Kandi. Pine and rhododendron forests covered the mountains, while the snows of Kulu rose imposingly across the valley. The hill sides were carpeted with flowers and ferns, and above the depression of the pass some fine precipices, fringed with pines, towered up to a good height. A nine mile descent brought us to Bajaura, which may be regarded as lower Kulu.

All along the road we met ever increasing numbers of Lahoulis travelling. They looked very hot in their thick brown or mauve highland coats, which hung to the knee. And, indeed, I believe they feel the heat considerably, and look upon the lower parts of Kulu as quite unbearable. They are a Tartar featured people, with high cheek bones and narrow eyes, and

many of them wear pigtails. In dress and appearance they resemble the Ladakhis or Tibetans. Many of them are Buddhists of a debased type, but the majority are Hindus or Anamists. Those we met at this time of the year had wintered in Kulu, the passes into Lahoul being still closed, as the snowfalls that year had been exceptionally heavy. While stopping in the Kulu valley they occupy little thatched huts or tents. Some of these tents are embroidered with Tibetan ideographs, like those now seen in Kashmir carving, in the so-called Lhasa pattern. The women wear the turquoise-studded perak, or leather flap, of Ladakh, and also wings of false black hair on either side of the face. They are covered with ornaments. The men often carry prayer-wheels, silver turquoise studded charm boxes, brass pipes, flint tinders, and a round bamboo cylinder, in which they make their tea. They ordinarily use brick tea, and add to it a little flour and salt till the mixture is like soup. This same Mongolian type is met with in Rampur and Chini in Bashahr. Like the Ladakhis, they are polyandrous. Flocks of goats were also going up the road, carrying loads of salt or rice in little pack saddles. They usually come down empty from Lahoul. A big goat carries as much as twenty pounds. In Ladakh, goats are similarly used for carrying borax.

From Bajaura to Kulu the road is flat and easy, and is shaded all the way by drek (Himalayan lilac) and alders. Compared with Upper Kulu, the Bajaura valley is not very beautiful. At the prettily wooded village of Boon, a bridge spans the Beas, and a road

leads up the Parbathi Nullah, which contains some very fine scenery. Two marches up, at Manikarn, there are some hot springs which come up boiling out of the ground. It is a place of pilgrimage, and the water is so hot that rice thrown into it is quickly cooked. The spring is said to rise and fall with the Parbathi stream. The rocks all round are also quite hot. There are several other hot springs in Kulu. There is one half way between Nagar and Manali, which comes up into a tank. Its waters are just the right temperature for a warm bath, and we saw mothers washing their children in it. There are larger springs at Bashist, beyond Manali. They flow into two stone reservoirs in Bashist village, and behind them cliffs, crowned and fringed with pines, rise magnificently. Several cascades fall from these precipices. The water of the spring at Bashist was luke-warm early in May, but the villagers said that at the time of the melting of the snows the springs were always cooler, probably because some of the cold snow water becomes mixed with them. Several Europeans, who had signed the pundit's visitor's book, mentioned having bathed. There is a shrine near the tanks, where the black and forbidding figure of the *deota* Bashist stands with glistening eyes in the gloom of the temple.

At Bajaura I met an ancient Pathan called Abas Khan. He was a Mohmand, who had served in the 55th Coke's Rifles before Delhi, during the Mutiny. He was a bit of an Etienne Gerard in his way, and had, I fancy, promoted himself to the rank of jemadar.

He would have you believe that he and John Nicholson were intimate friends. "Abas Khan," Nicholsaine Sahib would say, "there is no food for your men—go and loot the bazaar." "There never was a Sahib like Nicholsaine Sahib,"—Abas Khan told us; "and here is the young *junglat* Sahib now, accusing me of stealing Government wood: I, who fought the Purbias and was wounded in the head."

I met another interesting native in Bajaura. He had been servant to a Captain and Mrs. Young for forty years. The Youngs speculated in silver, I believe, and were in consequence reduced to the most abject poverty. This old servant served then for several years after they could no longer afford to pay him a wage. The old people have now been long dead, but a settler gives the faithful servant a pension. It is a rare case of fidelity, which is perhaps worth noting.

Kulu town, or as it is also called, Sultanpur, is a very pleasant place. The village is shut in by high hills. The lower slopes are bare, but there are pine forests higher up. The river Beas runs brawling over shallows, forming many wooded islands. There is an expanse of turf on which to encamp, amidst a clump of deodars; and there is a bungalow, a post office, a hospital and a cemetery—in fact, everything that one is likely to require. There is a great festival at Sultanpur every year, when all the local gods, the *deota*, and *devi*, are brought to pay their respects to Rughnath, the god of Sultanpur. Rughnath is enthroned in a heavy car, which is decorated and drawn about the green. The gods of Kulu, three hundred

and sixty in number, travel to the festival with as much show as possible. Those who can afford it travel in palanquins, with many followers, and those who are poor, ride on the back of a coolie. Three hundred and sixty gods!! Have I misnamed this book? No! Kulu is indeed the realm of the gods. Their people dress them, feed them, marry them, carry them about on visits—and love them. The Raja of Kulu usually assists at this festival. He now lives on a private *jagir* of fifteen thousand rupees a year, and has no active political influence. The religion of Kulu consists chiefly in the worship of *deotas* and *devis*—the male and female gods or godlings of the locality. The usual worship of Shivajee and Vishnu exists in theory, but the people have a profounder respect for their local gods. The shrines of the *deotas* have often extensive property belonging to them, from which they obtain their revenue, and I believe that as much as one-seventh of the total cultivated area of Kulu belongs to various gods. As this god-owned property is excused all manner of taxes, one is surprised at the tolerance of a Government which will put up with such a state of things. One *deota* was very annoyed a little while ago, because his land was not assessed in the present settlement. It is quite common for a man to transfer part of his property to his local *deota*. A case occurred the other day when the priests insisted on the sanction of Government being obtained for such a gift, because, they said, the transfer under the Land Alienation Act, could not legally take place without such sanction,

except to an agriculturist, and the *deota*, as they pointed out, was a god and not an agriculturist. The case was sent up to Government, and sanctioned.

There are a few Hindu temples in Nagar of the usual stone conical type, but for some reason a wooden roof, like an umbrella, is always placed over them. Another kind of temple commonly found in Kulu is built of wood only, and is rather like a pagoda, with diminishing roofs, rising one above the other. There are many such shrines in the jungles. No trees can be cut within forty yards of a temple, except for repairing purposes, or when, as sometimes happens, the priests of one shrine say that their *deota* has expressed a wish to make a little present of one of his trees to a neighbouring *devi*, who happens to have none of her own. Speaking broadly, the stone conical temple may be regarded as the shrine of the valley, and the wooden pagoda as that of the mountains and forests. This applies to Chamba as well as to Kulu.

The most important *deota* in Kulu, and one who is greatly revered, is Jamlu. He never visits other godlings, not even Rughnath of Sultanpur. He is a brother of Ghapon, who lives on the snowy white peak in Lahoul, which is visible at the end of the Kulu valley. Ghapon, by the way, had a quarrel with his sister Himru, and threw her over the Rohtang pass. The goddess landed on her hip in Manali, where her shrine is now situated. Ghapon's peak is very nearly 20,000 feet above sea level. But to return to Jamlu. He had a large *jagir*, or property, at Malana, which is the headquarters of his worship; and he

holds other estates besides. His shrine used to be a place of refuge for criminals. He has no image of his own, but is represented by a golden elephant, said to have been given by the Emperor Akbar himself. There are some who believe that the word Jamlu is derived from Jaimal Khan, one of Akbar's Mahommedan generals. At the yearly *mela* held at Malana they kill a sheep in the Mahommedan way, that is by cutting its throat, instead of by the usual Hindu method of *jutka*, or decapitation. This may be regarded as a still further proof that the worship of the Hindu godling Jamlu has a Mussulman origin.

Malana, which has been mentioned above, is a very sacred place. For this reason no one enters the village with his shoes on. It lies in the Parbathi nullah, and is so inaccessible that its inhabitants speak a language of their own, not understood elsewhere in Kulu. They marry strictly amongst themselves, and the whole community are under the special protection of Jamlu. The people of Malana do all in their power to keep their secluded valley to themselves, and do not encourage travellers or sportsmen to visit it. They seldom approach even the political officer, and usually settle their disputes amongst themselves. On one occasion troops had to be moved up against them.

The villagers everywhere in Kulu refer any important questions relating to the weather, or to the success of their crops, to their *deotas*. They, however, have as much faith in the forecast of their political officers, as in the often ambiguous replies given by the gods. Almost every village has its own *deotas* or

devis, who occupy temples, peaks, tanks, trees and waterfalls. Disputes are settled by trials of ordeal before some shrine. The temple near the castle in Nagar is a particularly favourite spot for such tests. The trials are held near some sacred stones, miraculously transported there by bees. Each party selects a goat, and the man whose goat shivers first is believed to be in the right, and wins the case. The other goat is sacrificed.

Leaving Sultanpur we passed through its long bazaars, which extend for nearly a mile. I heard a Lahauli playing a *surnai*, or pipe, which had a low and very sweet tone like a 'cello. It produced the most melodious native music I have ever heard. The *surnai* was a very old one, and was decorated in silver with the usual eight Buddhist symbols. I was surprised to hear the Zakhmi Dil, (Wounded Heart) the love song of the North West Frontier, being played and sung all over Kulu. It had probably been introduced by strolling musicians.

Soon we began to enter scenery of surpassing beauty—as beautiful as the middle portions of the Scind valley of Kashmir, which this part of Kulu very much resembled. All the way the road lay along the bank of the Beas, now a wild, tumultuous torrent of about the same volume as the Scind. Quantities of alders grew beside the river and covered its many islands. Alders, are *par excellence* the trees of the Kulu Valley. In some places we passed through lovely copses, where ferns, buttercups, and all kinds of wild flowers grew luxuriantly, and where

streams flowed through beds of watercress. On the left the hills were bare ; but on the right, pine forests covered the slopes. Ahead were beautiful snows, towering up to a great height. The valley was open, and green. Barley and wheat crops were standing high. In one place I saw a tea-garden.

About half-way to Nagar we crossed to the left bank of the Beas, and just beyond the bridge came to a very fine waterfall. The torrent leaps for some fifty feet down a cleft in the rocks. It is at this season a considerable stream, overhung with trees and wreathed with ferns. Two thirds of the way down there is a sort of cup in the cleft, from which half the cascade leaps out, and shoots across the bed of the stream. So violent is the force with which the water dashes against the rocks, that a shower of spray, like fine driven rain, wets the road-way and bridge below the falls to a distance of forty feet.

Nagar is a large village. Several Europeans live there and have built themselves nice houses. The Raja of Kulu's old place, known as the ' Castle,' is used by the political officer as his residence. The gardens are filled with roses, fruit trees, and vegetables. The pears and apples of Kulu are famous. There are strawberries, artichokes, cabbages, asparagus, rhubarb and salads all growing up well. In the valley there are *deodars*, alders, and fruit trees ; and on the mountains, coming right down to the vale, are *deodars*, (*pinus excelsa*) and blue pines (*kial*). Glorious snows completely encircle this favoured spot.

Many of the surrounding peaks are fourteen thousand feet high. Those up the valley, shutting out Lahoul, are considerably higher ; and Ghapon's Peak is nearly twenty thousand. The last winter's snowfall had been the heaviest known for years, and even the Bubu Pass, which is only ten thousand feet, was not yet open for pony traffic. Nagar is 5,900 feet above sea level.

Such is Kulu, a land of great beauty, cool breezes, and luscious fruit—an ideal holiday ground. Trout are breeding in its streams. There are *chicore* and *munal* innumerable, on the hills. Four kinds of pheasants can be shot. There are dozens of black bear in the forests ; and below the snows you can get *tar*, *gurul*, and red bear. The red bear are not as plentiful as they were, but a good Kulu sportsman assured me that other kinds of game were now more plentiful than they used to be twenty years ago. Only seven game licenses were issued for the whole of the summer, and as two of these were taken by officials who had themselves made the rules, and as the state of the forests were said by some not to require such strict protection, it was complained that Kulu was being used as a private preserve. And from the outsider's point of view it certainly was, as even some of the remaining licenses were snapped up by residents in the valley. For the artist Kulu offers unlimited scope, and the naturalist will be delighted with the butterflies and birds of paradise. Leading out from the main valley, there are endless miles of wooded uplands to explore.

There are few parts of Kashmir even, which are more attractive than the upper portions of Kulu. The Manali valley is quite one of the finest holiday grounds one could wish to find. Manali itself is 6,300 feet above the sea level, and the peaks which rise around it run to fifteen and sixteen thousand feet. Its climate in summer is, therefore, preferable to that of the main Kashmir vale, which is only 5,000 feet. Its scenery is superb, and sport, as already mentioned, is still as good as it ever was. The black bear in Manali are very destructive to the crops and fruit gardens, and the red bear are a constant anxiety to shepherds grazing their flocks beneath the snows. The fishing in Kulu is poor, the water being rather too cold for *mahseer*. They are, however, sometimes caught up the Parbati nullah.

An effort is now being made to breed trout, with which to stock the streams. The *ova* was obtained from Kashmir, where trout are already firmly established and well able to take care of themselves. But trout are by no means established in Kulu yet, and though eggs which were put into selected streams hatched out satisfactorily, the young fish have since entirely disappeared. Those hatched out in the tanks at Nagar are, however, doing well, and fish only a year old, often weigh a pound. The hatcheries at Nagar are very carefully looked after, and in a year or so some of the more favourable streams will be stocked.

The Kulu streams are, however, subject to sudden and violent spates which make them less favourable

for trout than those of Kashmir. There sudden floods are probably responsible for the disappearance of the young fish.

Besides this effort to improve the fisheries, other experiments are being tried with sheep, and about a dozen Merino rams were imported from New Zealand and put with the flocks. As a result, there were several lambs, but the parent rams did not seem to thrive, and many died from disease or accident. It is doubtful too whether the natives appreciated the experiment, as they did not know how to wash and treat the wool of the Merino, which is much more tightly curled than ordinary sheep's wool. At any rate several of the rams died under most suspicious circumstances, and some seem to have been pushed over cliffs to be got rid of. The Government of India at one time took a great interest in the experiment.

The villages in Kulu look very much like those of Switzerland, backed, as they frequently are, by pine forests, running up into the snows. The houses have big gables and balconies, and are usually built of stone, with layers of wooden beams between. This system, though very expensive in timber, is encouraged by the Government, since houses so built were the very ones which best withstood the Kangra earthquake. Thanks to the peculiar settlement, the villagers are allowed as much free timber as they actually require for building and repairs. The houses are nearly always roofed with slate. The slate is quarried near Sultanpur (Kulu). It is not as good as the Dharamsala slate, being really only a mica schist, but it

answers the purpose very well, and is cheap too—being only half an anna a slab, or three rupees for one hundred slabs. The upper storeys of the houses are usually larger than the lower, but the buildings are very solid. A hole is nearly always left in one of the walls for bees to hive in.

Manali is a charming little place, surrounded by high mountains covered with dense forests. There are turf expanses where camps are pitched amid the *deodar* and blue pine. The end of the valley is closed by the great snowy ranges, behind which are the Bara Banghal mountains.

The Kulu women, whose morals are, I believe, acknowledged to be 'the limit,' are occasionally very pretty, especially those with lighter complexions. Their dress consists of a blanket, held about them with pins, and is a great deal more picturesque than it sounds. A gay kerchief is tied over the head, and they are often loaded with jewels, turquoise, coral necklaces and silver or enamel breast ornaments. The girls and unmarried women always wear a pear shaped pendant from the nose, and married women wear the *balu*, or nose ring. Widows do not wear these ornaments. The women do most of the work in the fields, except the actual ploughing. As labourers they are most valuable to their husbands, who are often called away from their homes, and employed in carrying loads. This actual labour value of a wife often, it is said, saves her from the just penalties of her infidelities. The men are fine looking fellows. They are said not to be brave, but they certainly have

a pluck of their own, and are frequently known to kill a bear or a leopard with nothing but a pointed stick. They look as if they belonged to the Dard family of Gilgit, Hanza or Chitral, though I suppose this cannot be the case. Still, a Kulu man dressed in his grey or brown tunic, with a gay flower stuck into his roll up cap, looks very much like a Chitrali of a slightly dark colour. There seem to be no aristocratic classes in Kulu, as there are in other parts of Kangra. It should be noted by the way that Kulu, Spiti and Kangra proper, are all included within the boundaries of Kangra. There is an important community of Brahmans, and a sprinkling of Rajputs in Kulu ; but the bulk of the inhabitants come under two heads:— Kanets and Kolis. The Kanets are the great cultivating class—exclusively agriculturists and shepherds, who usually describe themselves as *zamindars*. The Kolis or Dagis, are a lower and a poorer class, and have few caste scruples.

Kulu possesses an immense extent of forest land which, however, only produces about seventy-one thousand rupees of revenue annually. Great quantities of trees are cut every year by contractors. Half the timber thus cut is *deodar*, and the other half blue pine. There is no necessity for planting young trees, as they spring up of themselves, though considerable damage is done to them by goats and sheep, whose owners have the right of grazing. Villagers may cut any wood, which grows on their own estates, except the *deodars*, and as already mentioned, may take as much timber as they require for building and repairs from the jungle at a

merely nominal rate of five rupees for a fine *deodar*. The contractors have to pay as much as Rs. 70 for a *deodar*. That part of the Beas river which passes through the territories of the Raja of Mandi is rented by Government for Rs. 500 a year, for floating down the timber of Kulu to the Punjab. Yet, with all this drain on the jungles, there is no fear of de-forestation. Kangra proper is being rapidly de-forested in spite of all precautions, but Kulu is not.

A serious question in this connection is that of grazing. The *gadis*, or shepherds, drive hundreds of thousands of goats and sheep up and down the valley twice a year when they migrate, and these have the right to graze as they go, though the length of their stay in Kulu is limited. They winter down in Mandi and summer in Lahoul, where each flock owns, by right of unquestioned heredity, its own upland run.

The climate of Kulu seems to be very suitable for Europeans, and there are a number of English settlers at Bajaura, Kulu, Nagar and Manali, where they have built themselves pleasant houses. To die at sixty in Kulu, is to be nipped in the bud of youth. One old couple lying in the peaceful cemetery at Kulu were respectively 60 and 76. Captain and Mrs. Young, two well known figures in semi-recent history, were both 80; and most of the present settlers—in fact nearly all—range from 72 to 85. We did not notice any exceptionally old people amongst the natives, but the so-called “Old Woman of Manali” was old, even in the earliest memory of the other old inhabitants. There is no record of her age, but she is without doubt, very ancient.

The Rohtang is the pass which leads from Upper Kulu to Lahoul. From Manali to the summit is about fifteen miles, and there is a little rest house half-way at Rala. The scenery of Rala is the finest in Kulu. Above Manali rise some imposing pine fringed cliffs, down which half a dozen waterfalls leap. The alders, above Manali, begin to give place to pines. Thousands of lizards skip helter-skelter over the boulders as you pass. The Beas river is now a mere mountain torrent, and is exceedingly violent, as it boils its way down a steep and rocky bed. It rises in the Rohtang range, not very far beyond Rala. The road ascends steeply, till the two highest villages in the Kulu Valley are passed. Looking back for a last view of Kulu, it is seen shut in on all sides by snowy mountains ; and everywhere the dark blue pine forests are picked out from the snow fields with which they intermingle. Just beyond the last village, the Beas plunges into a chasm about 100 feet deep, and hardly 15 feet wide, and is lost sight of under broken snow bridges, till it emerges again a quarter of a mile below. The gorge soon becomes very enclosed, and the mountains around are precipitous. Snow lies in the more sheltered parts till the end of May. Here and there the debris of an avalanche, with its broken-up trees, lies across the path until late into the summer. Near Rala there is an amphi-theatre of stupendous cliffs with eight streams falling from the melting snows. Some slip in cascades down clefts, or leap from ledge to ledge ; but others slide over precipices, falling till they dissolve into sheets of spray, which

the wind blows away like driven mists before they can reach the base of the cliffs, three hundred feet below. Rala hut stands about 9,000 feet above sea level, amidst the silent snows. The path to Rohtang (which is 13,000 feet) rises steeply above it, and is rarely open for pony traffic until the middle of May.

GOD OF A PINE.

(To a God of Kulu.)

1.

God of a pine am I,
 Haunting the hill.
 The simple passers-by
 With terror fill.
 Before my little shrine
 Flowers they lay;
 To soothe my wrath divine
 Daily they pray.

2.

Shadows move restlessly
 All through the day;
 That is the ghost of me
 Flitting at play.
 Often I sit aloft,
 High on a bough;
 That is my whisper soft
 When the winds sigh.

3.

Watch now a girl pass by,
 Stop at my tree
 Parting the branches, I
 Look down to see
 At dusk, for fear of me,
 Lads sing and shout,
 Stepping quick past my tree
 Lest I spring out.

4.

See now, the village folk
 Ask for a sign,
 My oracle invoke
 I must divine
 If lucky they shall be
 Omens are these—:
 The goats they bring to me
 Straightway will sneeze.

5.

Down in the villages
 People grow old,
 Even my image is
 Sunk in the mould.
 But I am deathless, I
 No ageing know:
 Young as a butterfly,
 Old as the snow.

6.

Way down the vale I hear
 Plash of a stream,
 Where lives, by water clear,
 My fairy Queen
 Villagers carry me
 There, now and then,
 To meet my own Devi
 Down in her glen.

7.

Ours is a happy, long
 Festival day;
 Feasting and love and song
 Dancing and play.
 Then I go home again,
 Back to my pine
 Silence will fall again
 Over my shrine.

8.

Soft are the sounds I know
 Falling of cone,
 Murmur of melting snow
 Dripping on stone.
 Haunting and shadowy,
 I thrill the air.
 You feel the ghost of me
 When I am there.

CHAPTER III.

CHAMBA, BADRAWAR AND KISHTIWAR.

Bubu Pass—Palampur—A marriage procession—An assault—Chaori—Chamba—More about godlings—Antiquities of Chamba—Copper plates—Temples of Chamba town—Legends of Shah Madar and Bannu—Ranas—Cases of burying alive—Mushar Varma—The Raja of Chamba—Brahmans—Transport difficulties—The Padri Pass—Badrawar—Kishtiwar—Chandra Bagha—Maru Wardwan valley and Margam pass—Sintan pass—Approach to Kashmir—Atchibal

It is now necessary to retrace our steps from Rala at the foot of the Rohtang, and return to Sultanpur (Kulu) from whence a road leads to Chamba. It was my first intention to cross the Rohtang and proceed down the Chandra Baga river to Kishtiwar, and thence to Kashmir. But unfortunately the snow fall in winter of 1910-11 had been so exceptionally heavy, that the Rohtang remained closed for ponies until late in the summer. Nor was I willing to make coolies undertake a task involving some little risk. I therefore returned from Rala to Manali, and from there back to Nagar. At Nagar I stopped a few days with Mr. Glover, the forest officer, whose charming house commands a fine view over the Kulu valley to the snows beyond. I got to know some of the Europeans who had settled there.

The Raja of Kulu used to live at Nagar, but has now transferred his head-quarters to Sultanpur, where he is content to live on a liberal *jagir*. The Political Officer at Nagar, as I mentioned before, uses the Raja's old palace as his Residency. It is a fine double-storied stone building, with handsome wooden verandahs protruding from the upper portions. The view over the valley from its balconies is grand. Here and there small holes are left as usual in the stone work of the walls, for bees to hive in.

There was still a good deal of doubt as to the state of even the Bubu pass, which is only about 10,000 feet. As a rule by this time (6th of May) the pass is quite clear of snow, but travellers who had lately crossed declared it to be still closed for ponies. I decided to return to Sultanpur, from whence the road to the Bubu branches off, and to make an attempt.

We left the main Kulu valley at Sultanpur and ascended a side glen to Karaun, where there is a small rest house. The scenery in this valley was very fine, and at Karaun, which is about 8,000 feet, the hills are precipitous. In the evening we watched a shepherd bringing a flock of sheep home down some steep slopes and along the crests of precipitous cliffs. It so happened that two Europeans also arrived at Karaun. So we fore-gathered. They had just crossed the pass with coolies, and reported it quite impossible for pony transport. They very generously gave me some of their coolies in exchange for my ponies, and so enabled me to get over on the following day.

The climb up to the Bubu was through beautiful

forests of horse-chestnuts and deodars. The snow lay deep over the bridle path, and for the most part we ascended by short cuts to the summit, which was completely blocked. The crest of the pass is very narrow. The view from it over Kulu was magnificent, and we lingered over our breakfast on the ridge enjoying the scenery. Then we descended steeply to Sil Badwani, and were again in Kangra proper. After some days hot marching we reached Palampur. The country through which I travelled was low, hot, ugly and uninteresting. In places tea gardens extended for miles.

There is only one really good metalled road in Kangra, and that runs from the rail head at Pathankote to Palampur. Palampur is a big place with a good bazaar, so that we were able to buy stores, and have a few damaged articles of camp equipment repaired. Thus far, there had been bungalows of sorts at a good many of the halting places, but it had been necessary to carry tents all the same. A glance at the map will show that we had by now doubled back through Upper Kangra, and were nearly level again with Dera Gopipa. Palampur lies in a *chil* forest, and the Bagsu snows rise up magnificently from the low hills of Dharamsala. The little church at Palampur was completely wrecked by the earthquake of 1905, and is now merely a creeper grown ruin. The Hindu temples of Kangra are all built of stone and consequently suffered greatly. But most of them have been repaired long ago, and it seems strange that only the church of the Sahibs' should still be a ruin amongst the tomb stones.

Until now, I had fully hoped to be able to visit the town of Kangra and see the fortress of Kot Kangra, which occupies and crowns a lofty ridge. There are said to be some fine temples there too. The fortress was for centuries the stronghold of the Katoch chiefs, and sentiment and tradition cling round it. It was, however, by now the 13th of May, and the heat had become so oppressive that I decided to drive down to Shahpur, and from there strike up north into the hills towards Chamba.

The path from Shahpur to Suinta was very rough, and there was a good deal of climbing. In places the hills were covered with pink oleander which were in full bloom. The forest in one part had caught fire, and a whole hill-side was ablaze. A column of smoke rose from it to a great height into the air.

On this march I met the party of the Tikka Sahib of Kotliar who was returning from the marriage of his son with the daughter of the Raja of Chamba. He travelled across the passes in a rich palanquin, and the procession reminded me of Lalla Rookh's journey through the hills. There was an army of coolies carrying the bride's trousseau in a variety of tin boxes. Others carried silken umbrellas, peacock fans, silver wands, and others again were leading about fifty horses, of which eight, beautifully caparisoned, were a present to the bride from her father. Also he had given her silver chairs and a throne, and an elephant with a silver howdah. Later came a band, and behind it the silken palanquin of the bride, with silver net peep holes and silver umbrellas upon its roof,

Behind all rode the bridegroom, a handsome fellow—an ideal Feramoz—dressed in salmon silk, with a jewel in his *puggree*. Nor was the stout and querulous Fadladeen absent from the cortege, bumping heavily over the hills in his litter.

As I mentioned before, the Tikka Sahib of Kotlier was assisting the Raja of Mandi to manage his state. One of my baggage ponies which was following some way behind collided in a narrow place with a mule of the cortege, and threw it down the khud. I believe the mule was killed.

Suinta, where I halted for the night, is in Chamba territory. I came armed with letters of introduction from His Highness the Maharaja of Kapurthala and the late Raja Sir Partap Singh of Kapurthala, so that the episode which occurred next morning on starting from Suinta was as painful to Raja Bhuri Singh of Chamba, as it certainly was to me.

I had sent the whole of my baggage on ahead with the servants and orderly, and remained behind alone with my small tiffin basket, for which the lumbadar, or head man, had gone off to fetch an extra coolie. He was away nearly half an hour, so I addressed three men in a field near by, and asked one of them to go and hurry up the lumbadar. I suppose my meaning was misunderstood, but I was met with a curt refusal, and an order to 'clear out of our field'. This was followed by forcible hustling. I suppose any Britisher would resent this treatment as much as I did. A free fight ensued in which first I was badly knocked about with a bamboo *lathi*, which cut open my head in two

places and covered me with blood. Later, however, I did some punishing too. The whole village turned out buzzing like angry bees, and the lumbadar, or head man, arriving in the middle, and seeing me covered with blood, promptly fled. It was the *chowkidar* of the bungalow who remonstrated with my assailants, and in the lull which ensued, hoping I could retire honourably, I picked up my basket and walked off through the angry muttering villagers. I am ashamed to say that two sepoy of a certain Punjab regiment, with whom I had had a friendly chat the evening before, watched this affair with indifference.

Of course, Sir Bhuri Singh did all he could, and some weeks later when I had arrived in Kashmir he wrote to say that all my three assailants were in jail.

I halted that night at Chaori where I had a good deal of difficulty in getting transport, as I had unwisely relied on the promise of the lumbadar, and paid off the ponies which had accompanied me so far. There was a stiff up-hill pull of nine miles to the top of the Chaori pass (7,500 feet), and then a long and tedious descent into Chamba; but the view from the pass to the semi-circle of Dharamsala and Lahoul snows was very fine.

Chamba town lies on a high plateau overlooking the Ravi. A suspension bridge spans the river at a point where it comes boiling out of a *cul-de-sac*, into which it has thrust itself. The town lies all around an extensive turf green, called the *chaugan*, which was formerly used as a polo ground. The word *chaugan* is also applied in Chitral and Baltistan to the

peculiar kind of polo they play there. The bazaars, hospital, museum and the Raja's new house look on to this green, and the ungainly gables of His Highness' old palace rise above the smaller houses. Here and there richly carved stone temples, are scattered about. They are of the conical type, known as *shikhara*. The gilt pinnacles upon them are said to have been added in defiance of Aurangzebe's order to demolish the shrines. Above them is added the umbrella-like roof of slate or wood, which is also the peculiarity of the temples of Kulu.

As one marches in Chamba, the strange religion of the mountains is brought very strongly to notice. Here, as in Kangra and Kulu, the people are more observant of their local gods and godlings than of the greater deities, such as Shiva and Vishnu. Here also every village possesses gods of its own, and many of these minor deities are undoubtedly deified ancestors and heroes. There are a number of gods of a class known as Siddhs, who were probably ascetics of ancient times, now regarded as semi-divine. The Nag, Devi and Deota cults are the oldest in the hills, and probably of aboriginal origin. Springs of water are nearly always associated with Nag or snake worship, so much so that here, as in Kashmir, the word Nag, a snake, is used to denote a spring, and a Nag temple is usually found close by. The Nag deities are supposed to be able to produce rain. At certain seasons the milk of a whole village is dedicated to a Nag shrine for a week or so, and the traveller at such times will probably have to go without any, and will realise for once the

inconvenience of travelling in the realm of the gods. In former days, according to the '*Ain Akbari*' there were no less than 700 places in Kashmir where the snakes or nags were worshipped by Hindus. In the ancient Buddhist statuary of Gandhara (Peshawar), Nagas are constantly shown emerging from pools and springs. Dr. Neve explains that the Nag deities were supposed to assume the form of a snake, which enabled them to creep through mountain channels and emerge at the springs.

The shrines own trees, but the gods are not extensive landowners in Chamba like those of Kulu, in which place, as already mentioned, they hold about one-seventh of the whole cultivated land. The *pipal* tree is occasionally worshipped. Near Chaori I lunched under one, which I was afterwards told was a Brahman. A man came and gave it some water to drink. The spirits of the mountains, who control storms, are called Bakshasa, and are much feared by the *gadis*, or shepherds. It is interesting to note that ancestor reverence is strongly marked all through these hills, it being a belief that the living can obtain merit for the dead by doing good acts in their name, such, for example, as setting up a fountain in the name of the dead, or bridging a stream, or making or improving a road. The fact that the work is *in memoriam* is indicated by an inscription, or by carving a foot mark on a rock.

Chamba is one of the few hill states which wholly escaped the devastation of a Mussulman invasion, and so it has retained an exceptionally valuable collection

of records and of inscriptions on images, rocks, temples and fountains. But more important than all are the '*pattas*', or royal grants for titles and land, which were inscribed on copper plates. These are found in Chamba in larger numbers than elsewhere. Copper plates were used in Mandi too for ancient records. There are now 33 of these, kept in a safe in the Museum in Chamba. The oldest is for a grant of land in 950 A.D., the plate having been retained in the family ever since. I fancy there are not many English families who could produce title deeds dating from 120 years before the Norman conquest. There is another dated 980 A.D., and several others are nearly as ancient. The plates vary in size from 8 inches by 10, to over a foot square, and are now varnished and kept in wooden slides. As records, they are, of course invaluable, showing as they do, not only the claims to property, but also the dates and names of the kings who gave them—names which would otherwise have been lost to history. The earliest ones are undated.

The largest temple in Chamba is that of Lakshmi Narayan. Outside it, is a tall pillar with a handsome capital supporting a curious gilt figure called Gharl Pank—half-man and half bird. It has hands, the nose is hooked into a beak, and the figure has wings and a fan-shaped tail, and is probably Garuda the vehicle of Vishnu.

The hill rising behind the town is called Shah Madar, and there is a shrine half-way up it, to which belongs a curious legend dating back to 923 A.D. The Raja Sahila Varma, having founded Chamba and

having named it after his daughter Chamba Vati, built a canal to carry water to the site of his new town. But when the canal was ready, the water refused to enter it ; and this the Brahmans attributed to evil spirits, to appease which the Raja must sacrifice his wife or his son. The Rani volunteered, and climbing the Shah Madar hill, was there buried alive. The water then flowed into the canal. A broad flight of steps leads up the hill from the fountain to the tomb, and women and children hold a festival there every year. Should a member of the royal family die during any other festival, it would, of course, be immediately stopped, but the festival of Suien at the Rani's tomb would go on just the same. On the same hill is another shrine called Chanda Devi. The view over the town from either of these spurs is very beautiful. Another hill, divided from Shah Madar by a deep ravine, is called Bannu. It used to be inhabited by Ranas, who were very truculent and refused to pay their taxes. When called to Chamba they always became quite submissive, but were truculent again as soon as they returned to Bannu. Next time they came to Chamba, some of the soil of the Bannu hill was secretly spread beneath their carpet in durbar, and the Ranas were this time most offensive. So it became known that the soil of Bannu made its people lawless. Well, there is another Bannu away on the N. W. Frontier, whose people are also deplorably restive. Perhaps it is the soil that makes such brutes of the Bannu Waziris.

The Ranas, referred to above, have now practically disappeared, but they were once the feudal lords of

the land. Some of them were independent chiefs. To that age, and to the Ranas, Chamba owes a great number of its inscribed fountain stones, which are a feature of the country. They were often erected to some dead chief's memory, or to the memory of his wife, and on them the Ranas are depicted as warriors, mounted on their war horses.

The custom of burying people alive seems to have been a common form of sacrifice in the olden days in Chamba, and I can quote four instances which came to my notice. That of the Rani immured on Shah Madar hill has already been told. It is said that the old ruined fort of Taragarh is named after a *zamindar* called Tara, who was buried alive beneath its foundations to ensure the stability of its walls. Outside the village of Saraol, two miles from Chamba town on the Kashmir road, are two small pyramids, said to be the graves of a *guru* and his *chela* (disciple), who were buried alive at their own request.

One last legend I must record. No mouse may ever be killed in the palace at Chamba. This is because once a prince of Chamba was born in a cave during the flight of his mother, after the defeat and death of the Raja, his father. The newly born child was left in the cave till rescued by the fugitive Wazir, who found some mice keeping guard. So the boy was called Mushan Varma (Mushan meaning mouse), and on attaining manhood and winning back his father's throne, he prohibited the killing of mice—an order which is observed by the Rajas of Chamba to this day.



H. H. SIR BHURI SINGH, RAJA OF CHAMBA.

Chamba has its social side. Its delightful club and library puts many an Anglo-Indian station club to shame. It is indeed a pleasure, when washed, dressed, and shaved after that hot and weary climb over the Chaori pass, to drop into civilization in the evening, and to bask in the electric light, hear the tinkling of ice in your whiskey and soda, and talk to His Highness Sir Bhuri Singh. There are few Indian princes who take such care of the comfort of travellers passing through their territories. The Raja appears to have a high opinion of the British officer, but it is hardly as high as the opinion sportsmen have of His Highness. It is his habit always to pay a return visit personally to British officers who have called upon him, a small attention which is naturally very much appreciated. He personally watches all the departments, and the state appears to be run on the most business-like lines.

The electricity, which works lights, fans, and even arc lamps in the bazaars, is generated by the Ravi, and there is a power station just below the town.

Chamba lies at an elevation of 3,000 feet above the sea. There are usually a couple of heavy falls of snow in the winter, and in the summer the climate is hot. However, sportsmen get their shooting in the high *nullahs* where it is cool, and where the scenery is very grand.

The Brahmans of the Chamba hills are mostly agriculturists. Those who live in Chamba town observe caste strictly, but amongst those who inhabit the hills the prejudice against ploughing is fast dis-

appearing. Many of them are quite poor; and in some places, such as at Sungal, the entire population is Brahman. Many of them act as *parohits* or priests at shrines, but many *parohits* are Rathis as in Kulu.

The Rathis and Thakurs form the bulk of the population, and usually call themselves *zamindars*. They form the great agricultural classes. Next in interest and importance are the *gadis*, or shepherds, who own land in Chamba, and who go down for the winter into Kangra to find grazing for their sheep and goats. The wanderings of these *gadis* in Chamba, Kulu and Kangra lead to many complications, as they do much damage, and of course, try their best to evade being taxed. On the other hand, their flocks furnish valuable manure to the land they halt upon, and this manure alone is a substantial return to the people whose lands are grazed over.

The *gadis* seem a nice, friendly class of people. Those of Chamba are handsome, and hardened until they can endure any extent of cold. Like those of lower Kangra they are dressed in stout grey *puttu*, with a rope belt; and like all other *gadis* they carry a varied collection of articles in the pouches of their shirts.

The names which these people adopt are rather curious. A man may be called Jhunnu, idle: or Misan, pig-nosed: or Chadhu, cross legged: or Tanju, cat's eyed: or Bhang Retu, squinter: or Chulan Rou, tippler.

We left Chamba on the 19th of May. The Raja kindly lent us horses to ride. From Jullundur to

Chamba by the round-about way we have come is a distance of 413 miles. Chamba State is the most expensive country I have ever travelled in in the Himalayas. The established rates for coolies are quite unfair on the traveller, and one wonders who is responsible for fixing them. For example from Chaori to Chamba is a long, but perfectly easy march of 18 miles. The *nirik*, or rate, for coolies is 10 annas. You would delight a poor Balti or Ladakhi if you gave him 6 annas, with snow and a fifteen thousand foot pass thrown in. A Kashmiri coolie would be equally pleased, and would carry a heavier load. The Chamba coolie crawls, or is dragged, from his village in the morning from two to five hours late (I do not exaggerate). He then complains bitterly all day at the heat of the sun, and at the end of the march contemplates the wealth you are obliged to pay him, with the expression of an injured cabman.

There is no greater difficulty with which sportsmen and travellers in the Himalayas are confronted, than with the question of transport. I have travelled pretty extensively in the valleys of the Beas, Chenab, Jhelum and Indus, that is in the whole mountain district from Simla to Srinagar; and everywhere I have found the greatest difficulty in procuring willing transport. *Begar* is a most unfortunate system, cursed with a most unfortunate name. The first requisite for procuring transport is that it should exist. As a rule it does not exist at all as a marketable commodity, and so it has to be impressed—a method under which sulky coolies and sulky pony men appear before the

traveller in their worst possible mood—unreasonable, unwilling and uncivil. The chief cause for this scarcity of coolie and pony transport is to be found in the general prosperity and wealth which has settled down over these mountain districts. The people are too well off. They don't want to earn money. They have enough already, and prefer to be idle. Now this prosperity of the villages is undoubtedly due to the good Governments under which they live, whether it be that of the Sirkar, or of Native States; and I therefore maintain that in return for this prosperity and for low taxes, their services on occasions are due to the state, even in those rare cases where this obligation is not actually specified under the rules of their settlement.

I therefore think that it is wrong to call such labour 'begar', or forced. It gives a false impression, and recalls the days when such services were unpaid as well as forced. Surely it should rather be called 'state obligation'—return in kind for the many benefits they receive, including peace, prosperity and comparative opulence.

Very frequently district or civil officers have told me frankly that they consider travellers and sportsmen a nuisance. They come for pure pleasure and not on duty. They come in the summer when the villagers are busiest. They take men away from their fields, when the crops most urgently need attention. But in spite of these undoubted truths, I do not admit that the traveller and sportsmen deserve to be regarded as nuisances. Civil officers who look upon

them as such do not view the question broadly or consistently. They protect and assist merchants. Yet what merchant would not think he had spent a very unprofitable summer, if he dropped large sums of money in the country. I seldom have a two months holiday in these parts without benefiting the villagers to the extent of seven or eight hundred rupees. Therefore I claim at least equal protection with the merchant and trader.

Let us now examine the root of the evil. Firstly, the local European official regards the traveller and sportsman with hostility—or at any rate with no sympathy. And because this is India, that sentiment is only too quickly reflected down through the ranks of *tahsildars* and *ziladars* to *lumbardars* and *chowkidars* of villages. Secondly, though, the traveller is disciplined, the native officials are not. *Lumbardars* are aware that they can be insolent and negligent with impunity. The rank and file of coolies know that too.

When I say that the traveller is disciplined, I mean this—that the rates he pays are fixed (often very high) the distances of his marches are fixed (often very low). Every disadvantage is his. In Chamba he has to pay an anna a mile for a coolie, who only carries thirty seers. Calculate this out, and you will find it costs a subaltern officer his day's pay to march 14 miles. On the Gilgit road he has to pay return fares to men who, ten years ago, were doing similar service for no wages at all, and were left by their *Government* employers to die on the passes at the end. In Ladakh and Baltistan

he has to conform to strict rules, and his very numbers are limited. Again, due notice of his approach, his journey, his dates and his requirements have to be given weeks beforehand. Yes, I think everyone will admit that the traveller is thoroughly disciplined. But, one asks, why should this be so—if at the end of it he is provided with nothing, and has to fight out his own battles, just as if no notice at all had been given of his requirements.

Travellers and sportsmen in these parts of the Himalayas are seeking recreation and health, after hard work done in the service of the state, in the hot and unhealthy plains. If, as I have claimed, there are obligations due by villagers to their Governments, surely these travellers and sportsmen, being generally Government servants on a holiday, are entitled to benefit by such obligations. Anyway they seem to me to be as fully entitled as the local civil officials who claim to be on duty. A peculiar sort of duty sometimes it is too, to count donkeys going over a pass. Now for a remedy—for I am not on the grouse simply for the pleasure of grousing. First it is essential that discipline be extended to the *tahsildars*, *lumbardars* and coolies, as well as to the travellers, and that native officials failing in their duties, for which they are paid, should be punished. Secondly it is necessary that civil and district officers should cultivate a sympathy with travellers, and what is far more important still, let that sympathy be plainly seen by their native subordinates. Thirdly, all European travellers should be furnished with *parwanas* or passes.

They do not want to travel free. They are even willing to pay highly for everything. But they do want the moral support of the state, as implied in a *parwana*. I think the Kashmir authorities understand this in part, since *parwanas* are now given to all travellers in Ladakh, where supplies really are scarce. I say in part only, because such assistance is not extended to the Gilgit road, where love or money will not induce the pampered inhabitants to take the trouble to sell an egg or a cup of milk. I could mention some native states whose *parwanas* would be most usefully employed as shaving paper on the first march, since no officials have the least respect for them. Here, of course, we come back to the question of discipline amongst lower native officials.

I am very well aware of the difficulties which arise when transport is wanted. I have travelled many hundred miles in these mountains—in Kulu, Kangra, Mandi, Chamba, Lahoul, Kashmir, Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit and the Pir Panjal, and I fully recognise that the discipline imposed on the traveller is the first step to the solution of the problem. But when will the other steps follow? I am convinced that in nine cases out of ten, friction between natives and travellers is due to the demands of the latter for the *very necessities of life*, without any authority except perhaps a thick stick, to back up those demands. You *must* have firewood and eggs and milk and a chicken now and then. Even after these remarks I can quite fancy a civil officer harping back to his crops. Of course *zamindars* must attend to their crops. But I ask this

question. Is it the Civil Officer who can afford to mention the matter.? He travels, quite unnecessarily *en prince* with one hundred and fifty to two hundred coolies, while the rest of us require our modest fifteen or twenty. We employ the *surplus* men of the village. He often commandeers the *whole* population. His coolies are impressed, and kept herded together for two or three days previously and sometimes under lock and key, while ours are sent down to camp on the morning we require them—and generally an hour or so late.

The first march from Chamba towards Kashmir is thirteen miles to Sundla. From one of the ridges, as we looked back, we took a farewell view of Chamba with some regret, for it is a hospitable little place, and its Raja does all in his power to help travellers on their way.

To avoid the heat, we were up and ready to start at 5 a.m. next day, but there was a hitch about coolies. The *lumbardar* was away, and the *chowkidar* was sick. Three coolies came at 8 a.m. and the last of them arrived at 11 o'clock. As I waited in desperate impatience, I whiled away the time by reading Burton's *Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Mecca*, and it gave me infinite consolation to see his description of a three-day struggle to get his passport viséd by a petty native official. After that I went through our own trials without even a 'damn'. Now there will be a good deal more hereafter about transport difficulties, and I make the most of them, so that the impatient and hot-tempered traveller shall not say afterwards that I deceived him. But I trust that I shall not be classed

amongst the ranks of those complaining travellers who allow their whole enjoyment to be spoiled by such trivialities. On the contrary, I always try and treat them lightly. But in truth the village communities of Chamba are truculent, inhospitable and impolite—markedly impolite in matters of salaaming and spitting. They are quite undisciplined, fearing neither their good Raja, nor any white man, nor even their own *lumbardars*. They easily become noisy and abusive, without apparent provocation. The system of forced labour riles them to a degree, and so the traveller has the pleasure of seeing them at their very worst. Also coolies change from day to-day, which is a bad plan, for no transport in the hills is amenable to discipline or reason, until it is owed at least three days' pay. All this I cogitated in the hottest part of the day, as we climbed up a seven mile ascent in the fierce sun. At the top was a hut where I slept till it was cool, and then walked on to Kihar in the evening.

Kihar to Lungera is an exceedingly pretty walk of fifteen miles. Not again shall I have any complaint to make of the scenery. The outer wall of the Himalayas was now left behind, and by this time we were deep into the mountains. The road rose easily but steadily all the way, and I think Lungera must be about 6,500 feet. The slate roofed and gabled houses of the valley gave place to flat roofed huts, clinging to the steep hill sides. These homesteads are painted white, with a broad band of grey round the lower part of the walls. They look neat and trim from a

distance. In one or two places there were pretty waterfalls in deep fern-clad glens, and masses of snow still lay about in ravines and forests. Deodars covered the higher hills, and the cool air and bright sunshine made you feel as if you could walk for ever. These conditions, unluckily, did not seem to have the same inspiring effect on the coolies, who toiled in and sank exhausted, saying they had never seen or carried such loads in their lives. This amused me very much, as from long experience I have learned that there is nothing so fatal as overloading men or beasts.

The *lumbardar* of Lungera, a bright star in his dark firmament, behaved splendidly, and produced my coolies by a reasonable hour next morning, and we proceeded to cross the Padri pass, 9,500 feet. We ascended steadily up a well wooded valley with the Padri torrent thundering down it. Then along green hill sides and grassy *murgs*, until the valley narrowed, and patches of snow gradually increased into an uninterrupted sheet, which bridged over the torrent in most places. Everywhere the hills were steep, and great blocks of snow had fallen and glissaded down the slopes. It would be quite impossible to take riding or baggage ponies over this pass so early in the year. When at last the valley became a mere narrow gorge, the path suddenly zig-zagged up five hundred feet to a shoulder of the mountains. It was quite difficult to find the way, as the melting of the snows had obliterated all tracks. I saw two *gujars* or shepherds some way above me, to whom I hallooed; but they, rightly thinking that I wanted something, and

so might be a nuisance, promptly fled. From the shoulder we dropped to a glen, which in time turned out to be the pass proper. In my own case it was a very literal drop, as I lost my footing and slipped down a long slope of snow, landing at last in the branches of a fallen tree. This narrow glen, which shelved gently upwards between pine-clad spurs, had a very wintry aspect. The trees were laden with snow. It was deadly silent. Sometimes we thought we heard a wind sighing through the snow-laden forests, but it turned out to be the murmur of torrents below our feet, hushed by their thick white mantle. We came to some *gujar* huts, but they were as yet still deserted. There was thunder and hail as we reached the summit of the pass. The tiffin coolie, who was profoundly ignorant of the way—a sign that forced labour had so far not worried him over much—decided that the storm was dangerous, and putting down my basket and camera, proceeded to bolt. There was a hot and successful pursuit, and the dangerous mutiny was nipped in the bud, before it communicated itself to the rest of the baggage transport in the rear.

It was raining hard when we reached the top of the pass, but through the driving shower the view over Badrawar was very beautiful. Snow covered all the hills, and the pine forests seemed to fight their way up to the snow fields in battalions and armies of mast forests, the bravest flung forward along the upper ridges. We took shelter under some ilex, and later the sun came out. At this spot, an hour later, my

orderly saw a red bear. Chamba was now left behind. Badrawar, after having changed hands several times, is now Kashmir territory.

Thanala, to which we descended from the Padri pass, was the first Mussulman village met with so far. I really was quite glad to greet a follower of the Prophet, for I confess to being very weary of the Hindu. The only camping ground was situated under two walnut trees—typically Kashmir—even to a large dung heap, which the villagers had chosen to collect on that very site.

Next morning we walked into Badrawar. It is a pretty little state, and contains much fine scenery. Badrawar town consists of some two hundred houses, mostly built of wood, and is decidedly picturesque. You see in it the first silvered temple, the first steepled mosque, and the first *chenar* tree—promise of the lovely land of Kashmir ahead.

There is a stiff climb of 1,500 feet above Badrawar to a ridge, on the crest of which was a Hindu shrine with a wooden pyramidal roof, such as forest temples always have. It was apparently dedicated to Nag worship, for three snakes were carved upon the roof, and one on each side of the door. In front was a tank, now dry, with great logs arranged as seats all round it. The transport skirmish was renewed on arrival at Chimta, and the question was referred to the nearest *tahsildar*, eight miles distant. He took the line of least resistance, and ordered me to take on the "poor" coolies I already had with me. The "poor" coolies were, however, quite equal to the occasion,

and bolted to a man, leaving me *tête-a-tête* with the *lumbardar*. "Travel is victory," says the Arab proverb; and at any rate it is a fact that in the the east travel is a battle—a battle against *tahsildars* and *lumbardars* and all the host of useless officials who one imagines (wrongly) are put there to be of some assistance. And if the battle does not end in victory, the next day's rising sun finds your tent still standing where it was the night before.

There was a rise above Chimta, and the path then followed along the crest of the hills, sometimes over the grassy southern slopes, sometimes through the dense deodar jungle on the northern side. The line between forest and pasture along the top of the ridge was sometimes very well-defined. It was a lovely walk. The snows of Chamba and Panji lay around us. Two conical peaks, one of which was particularly imposing, must, I think, have been the Brahma peaks, (21,000 feet). At Tora we waited six hours. Of these, three were employed in helping the *zaildar* in a wrangle with pony men. It was a truly oriental spectacle. There were fifty unladen ponies grazing on the hills. We went from one group of unwilling owners to another, till we hit upon the one least likely to offer serious resistance. And then the battle began: first entreaties, then threats, then abuse, then a mimic assault. Then somehow we got involved in a heated argument on a subject which had nothing to do with the case. At last the pony men gave way. Bits of saddlery were collected with incredible slowness. Ponies were saddled. Then food had to be cooked.

And just as a settlement was apparently made, the whole matter would be threshed out again. I itched to box their ears, *zaildars* and all. But at the same time I derived a sort of melancholy pleasure from the contest.

Janglawar was seven miles on, and the day was now far advanced. But we had to push on, as there was no nearer village, and we had wasted most of the day in recriminations. There was a long steep descent of several thousand feet through the pine forests to the Chandra Bhaḡa river. Janglawar occupied a fan-shaped bit of land above the river, and was surrounded by profuse cultivation. There was a large open shed in the village for the use of travellers, and there we spent the night. The ponies came in long after dusk. Each of the precious hours of daylight spent in arguments would have saved the pony men much painful stumbling in the dark. A chorus of protest rose as the saddles were placed under the legs of a bed ; but we were too exhausted to worry, and soon slept soundly with the blessed assurance that the driver's hopes of disappearing during the night had vanished.

From Janglawar there is a 22 mile march along the Chandra Baga, or Chenab river, to Kishtawar. The less said of that march the better. Suffice that the heat was intolerable, and the miles very long.

Kishtiwar consists of seven villages grouped round a flat grassy plateau. This *maidan* or plain, is considerably bigger than Annandale at Simla. In one corner a clump of *chenars* offers a splendid site for a camp. On a hill near the chief bazaar, is an old fort, which

was once the palace of the Raja of Kishtiwār, but it is now merely a police post. It contains two curious old cannon. From Kishtiwār a difficult track leads to Leh.

The people of Kishtiwār hold games on the plain, and some sports were in progress when we arrived. The chief item was ram fighting, in which everyone took the keenest interest. The rams were placed opposite each other, and charged again and again, meeting with a fearful whack, till one of them tottered and was knocked over. The winner was then led off amidst cheers.

The State of Kishtiwār is rather like Kashmir, to which it belongs. It is, however, lower. Great quantities of ilex grow in the valleys, and in the higher hills there are plenty of cedars. The Kishtiwāris are mostly Hindus. They are middle sized, lankey in build, and have rather foolish faces. They are, however, good natured. Of time or distance they have not the remotest idea, and a mile, or a *kos*, or a *ko*, are all the same to them. A few Dogras are found here too. There is plenty of game in the district, especially *Oorial*, *tar* and black bear; and the fishing is good.

We halted a while at Kishtiwār and enjoyed a 'Europe morning,' and received letters and English papers. Two days passed by very pleasantly and peacefully under the *chenars*.

We marched again on the 27th of May. About four miles from Kishtiwār the Chandra Bagha river emerges from some steep cliffs, and sweeps round and joins an almost equally big river, the Maru

Wardwan. The two race down the valley together as the Chenab river. It was inspiring to see this impetuous mass of water, surging and foaming along between the hills. Its angry voice drowned all other sounds.

On a previous occasion (in 1905) I turned off up the valley of the Maru Wardwan and proceeded by that route into Kashmir. The scenery of the Wardwan is considered almost the finest in Kashmir, and I would like to take this opportunity of referring to it. In most of its length Wardwan is shut in by stupendous cliffs, which tower up from the stream to a height of 21,000 feet above sea level. Indeed, so enclosed are these gloomy gorges, that the sunshine only finds its way in for a few hours during the day. The solitude of those imposing forests and crags is almost oppressive. For six months of the year the valley is completely cut off from the outside world, and communication between one village and another is even rendered impossible by reason of the great depths of snow which accumulate.

The inhabitants of Maru Wardwan are the nearest approach to primitive man I have ever seen. Their dress is almost indecently scanty. It consists only of a cap and a very short coat. The chief occupation during the summer is to store up food against the winter. This seems to consist chiefly of apples and walnuts. The patches of cultivation round the villages are very small. Cattle are not plentiful, and chickens often do not exist at all. Even in summer I found it difficult to get supplies.

The distance from the junction of the Wardwan and Chandra Bagha rivers to Inshin at the head of the Wardwan, is about 52 miles, and may be covered in three easy marches. The path is rough, and often strikes steeply up the mountains to avoid precipices or landslips; and when these are passed it descends as steeply again to the river. In places the hills are clothed with grasses and wild flowers, and at others are covered with magnificent *deodar* forests. Every village is buried in the dense foliage of walnut trees; and far up above, a dark fringe of pines against the skyline, crowns the precipices. I think I have never seen such magnificent scenery as in the Wardwan. We left this wonderful and isolated valley by way of the Margam Pass, 11,000 feet high. The path is steep, but in summer presents no difficulties. The summit is rather broad, and would be dangerous in winter. It consists of a shelving cleft, with high hills on either hand. Here and there the pass opens out into grassy expanses of turf, half sodden with water, and intersected with beds of boulders thrown up in great rough ridges. When I crossed the Margam, which was on the 22nd of August 1905, a thunder storm swept up over the mountains. Mist and rain hung over the pass, and the thunder made a tremendous noise, booming and crackling amongst the peaks. From the camp below the pass, it is only two long marches into Islamabad.

But to return to the junction of the Wardwan and Chandra Bagha rivers, from which this digression has taken us. We pushed on to Chatru; and next

morning breakfasted at the pretty little village of Chinigam, at the foot of the Sintan pass. Here my coolies took enough supplies to last them a couple of days. There was a steep pull of seven miles to Sintan, where we camped above the trees at the foot of the pass, and were rewarded next day by finding the snow in good condition—and indeed, there was considerably more of it than we had expected. The hill road was still unused, and we went up the torrent bed over the snow. It was real hard climbing on those slopes, which, when the sun got on to them, were very dazzling to the eyes. The Sintan pass is 11,800 feet, and we found the air rare. At last, gasping to the top, we were rewarded by glorious views in all directions. Looking back, the snows of Zanskar, Kishtiwari, and Chamba rose in mighty white peaks above the pine-clad valleys, which were still misty in the early morning light. Looking forward, the Kashmir vale—that most beautiful and favoured paradise—lay below us, encircled by pearly snows, of which the more distant ranges seemed to hang suspended in the sky. Tatticooti, Sunset peak and the Kónsa Nag peaks were seen to great advantage from where we stood, rising above the rest of the Pir Panjal. In fact not one degree in the whole circle of horizon was free from snow. Without doubt this was the finest scenery on the whole of this long march. So we descended from this abode of snow. Some of the bridges were bad; and shortly before I passed, a coolie fell from one of them into a torrent and was drowned. We spent the night at Dusoo. A great deal of Indian corn

is grown all about the village, and there are *machans* or platforms in every field in which men sit all night to frighten off the bears, when the crops are ripening. The noise they make by shouting and beating drums and tins would wake the dead, but the bears do great damage all the same. Next day we came to the old Mogul garden of Atchibal where we spent a lazy day on the turf enjoying the *chenars*, the shade, the cascades and the fruit. This was Kashmir proper—the Kashmir of balmy air and rich sunsets. From Atchibal we looked across the rice fields to the famous ruins of Martand. The old temple glowed in the sunset, as I have often watched it glow before.

It happened to be full moon that night. I shall never forget the beauty of that garden. Streams, sparkling like fire, poured away in all directions. The waterfalls ‘gleamed like a quick fall of stars.’ It was one of those nights you look back to always with regret.

‘ Ah ! Moon of my Delight who know’st no wane,

‘ The Moon of Heaven is rising once again :

‘ How oft hereafter rising shall she look,

‘ Through that same garden, after me in vain ?

We stopped three days in Atchibal, and while there made an excursion over the hills to Vernag which is the true source of the Jhelum. The Hindus, however, consider a smaller stream to be the real source. They call the Jhelum the Veth. Vernag is a charming spot associated with the Mogul Emperor Jehangir and his Queen Nur Mahal. Jehangir wished to be carried there when dying. A large spring rises from the foot

of a pine clad spur, and is received into a stone tank. From there the stream is led under the porch into the Emperor's garden where it passes beneath pavilions and down cascades, and so escapes down the valley. Vernag is one of the most sacred places of *nag* worship in Kashmir. Kalhana, the author of the chronicles of the Kings of Kashmir, known as the *Rajatarangini* (the river of Kings) has fancifully likened the spring at Vernag to a royal umbrella of which the Jhelum was the stick.*

Islamabad is only seven miles across the rice fields from Atchibal. The whole country was flooded with water for irrigation, and the reflections of hills and snows; and of people working in the fields were rich in colour. The light green sheen of young rice was over everything, and the natives were busy transplanting the crop from the nurseries into the fields. The Kashmiris are very skilful rice cultivators, and are to be seen, almost naked, working knee deep in water and mud all the summer. The crops require weeding three or four times, and at such periods rows of coolies advance slowly in line across the fields pulling up the weeds with deft fingers. One man usually sings some catchy air, and the whole line joins in with the chorus at the end of each verse. Two kinds of rice are grown in Kashmir, the white and the red.

Islamabad is called Anant Nag by the Hindus. It is the second town of Kashmir, and is situated at the

* That land (Kashmir) is protected by Tula, the lord of all Nagas, whose regal parasol is formed by the circular pond (Vernag), with the Vitasta's newly rising stream as its stick.

eastern end of the valley at the foot of an extensive plateau, or *karewah*. The noble ruins of Martand stand above it. Islamabad is a picturesque town with bright busy bazaars and quaint old temples and tanks. There is sulphur in one of the springs; and at a sacred tank the *pundits* feed fish with bread. Kambal is a village a mile below Islamabad, on the Jhelum. Big boats can come up only thus far.

A boat met us at Kambal suitably stocked with cherries, strawberries and artichokes from the gardens of Srinaagr. As soon as those wretched coolies—the last batch, thank goodness—were paid off, we cast loose and floated down on the swift current of the Jhelum, reaching Bij Bihara in a couple of hours. Bij Bihara is a picturesque river-side town. On the opposite bank there is a noble grove of *chenars*, where visitors often camp, and which was once a royal Mogul garden.

According to Stein the word Bij Bihara is a Punjabi corruption of Vijabror. The place was once the site of a celebrated temple of Siva (Vijayesvara) which was rebuilt during the reign of Asoka.* The town was founded later by King Vijaya † A quantity of stone was carried away by the late Maharaja Ranbir Singh, and the site of the famous old temple has now been partially built over.

In the afternoon we passed Avantipora which was the capital of King Avanti Varma in the ninth century. There are two ruined temples still standing

* *Rajatarangini*, Book I. verse 105

† *Rajatarangini*, Book II. verse 62.

near the river bank amongst the purple iris. A fine pillar remains erect in one of them, and the ruins, though weather worn and rusted with lichen, are worth seeing.

In the evening there was another gorgeous sunset, which burned amongst the peaks. Then the colour died away, and there were silhouettes against the white of the western sky—silhouettes of huts and trees and hills and cattle, and of man and women bending over the tow line. And then the crescent moon came straggling across the black waters of the Jhelum.

We continued to float leisurely down stream all night. The beat of paddle, awoke us in the early morning. We were just passing Pampoor (the Padmapura of the Ancients). Many large barges were moored to the bank, beside the village, and the tall spires of wooden mosques rose above the houses. Just below the town there was a fine grove of *chenar* trees where we spent the morning, breakfasting on the bank. A large extent of country behind Pampoor is devoted to the cultivation of saffron. The brilliant colouring of the saffron fields in October is one of the sights of Kashmir.

Later in the day we resumed the journey passing Pandrathan in the afternoon. It is the site of one of the ancient capitals of Kashmir, and was a flourishing city in the beginning of the tenth century. Traces of many buildings and of a large idol still exist in the neighbourhood. A beautiful little temple stands near the village in a shallow tank, surrounded by willows and *chenars*. It has wholly escaped the destruction

which has overtaken the rest of King Partha's city, and now remains the most perfect example of ancient Kashmir architecture. It was built, according to the *Rajatarangini*, in about 930 A. D. by Meru, the prime minister of King Partha, and was dedicated by him to Mahadeo. The inside of the roof is handsomely decorated, but as the boat on the tank is usually sunk, it is not always possible to view it. The dome inside is upheld by four winged cherubs.

Pandrathan is hardly a mile by road from Srinagar. But the journey by river is a long distance. The loops which the Jhelum here makes are said to have first suggested the Kashmir shawl pattern. Pandrathan is the modern form of the old name Purana—dhisthana, "the ancient capital." General Cunningham believed that the city of Sirnagari built by the great Asoka was situated here, but the whole question of its origin is open to doubt.

We reached Srinagar on the 4th of June, after having travelled 602 miles since leaving Jullundur.

ATCHIBAL

A MOGUL GARDEN

(To A. D. E. in memory of a night in 1905)

Ah! moon of my delight, who knows no wane,
The moon of Heaven is rising once again,
How oft, hereafter rising, shall she look
In this same garden after me, in vain?

See now, dear friend, how bright the water shines,
Like meteor tracks, in sparkling glittering lines
Of moon-lit ripples Sky of wonderous blue
Pierced by pale stars, against the darkening pines.

Hushed is the warm night air, Only the stream
New issued from its spring, murmurs this theme:—
“A little while,” it says, “the moon shall set,
And these bright waters soon shall cease to gleam”

“From hence we flow. Our waters then shall part.
So must you friends each on his way depart,
Then linger in the moonlight while you may
That dear companionship may warm your heart.”

Stay then : and when again the warm night air,
The streams, the scents of other gardens fair
Shall cast a spell, think then of Atchibal,
Recalling how we two have wandered there.

CHAPTER IV.

KASHMIR—SRINAGAR.

Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar,
Where are you now ? Who lies beneath your spell ?
Whom do you lead on Rapture's roadway, far,
Before you agonise them in farewell ?
Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar,
Where are you now ? Where are you now ?

Arrival in Srinagar—Meaning of the name—Jumma Musjid—
Miniature temples—Traditions—Pilgrimages—The Kashmiris—
The awakening of Kashmir—Cholera—Floods—Earthquakes—
The Dal lake—Nishat Bagh—Shalimar—Nasim Bagh—The
Takht.

Kashmir has been very thoroughly written up already. I must therefore, as far as possible, keep off old ground. Several fine standard works deal with Kashmir. Alas, also, it has become a subject for many gushing pens to scribble rubbish about, and a good many erroneous ideas have been forced upon the public mind and imagination. These have arisen no doubt from the fact that Kashmir was first described by men such as Vigne, von Hugel and Moorcroft, who, though keen observers, were only amateur archaeologists, and in two cases only amateur orientalists.*

* Of these early travellers Moorcroft alone had long experience of the East.

The conjectures and guesses of these early writers have by now been so frequently copied into other books, that even the errors have at last been accepted as established facts.

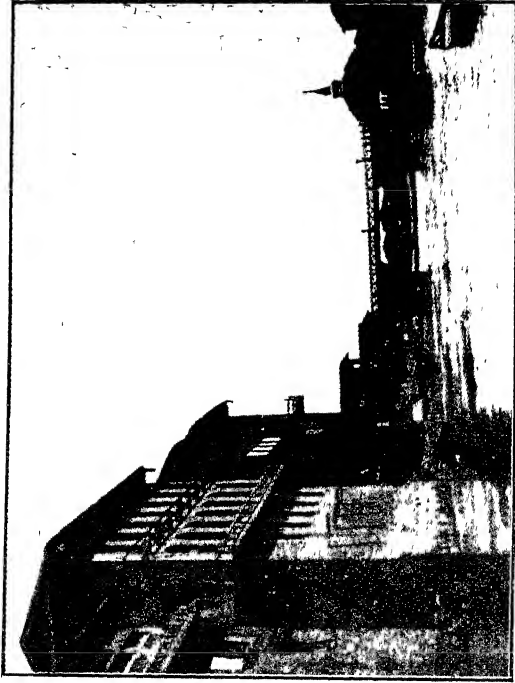
The most generally credited of these mistakes is the meaning 'City of the Sun', ascribed to the name Srinagar. S'rinagar is in fact 'Shri nagar', the 'place of 'Shri', the goddess of wealth. It could never possible be evolved from Surya Nagur.* Similarly Baramulla, does not mean 'the twelve Mullahs' as Vigne suggests, but is really 'Varahamula', the 'furrow of the boar'† a name derived from an ancient Hindu legend of Vishnu, who during his incarnation as a boar dug out the gorges of the Jhelum river at Baramulla with his tusks, and so drained away the lake which once filled the valley.‡

On reaching Srinagar, I took up my residence on my own house-boat, the 'Diana,' and moved her into the Chenar Bagh, which has always been the bachelor's quarter. As soon as we arrived *chupli wallas*, wood carvers, old curiosity dealers, gun makers and Turkish bath men crowded round ; but all were ruthlessly expelled for the time being. Only the fruit-man was welcome, with his fine black cherries and his strawberries. After him, the Turkish bath man found favour. The bath is, I should judge, a very old building, and is situated down in the city near the Third Bridge. The arrangements are crude, but water is

* Stein's *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II. p. 350.

† *Rajatarangini*, Ch. I. note to verse 147.

‡ See Note page 33.



SRINAGAR —THE VENICE OF ASIA

supplied from taps; and what the baths lack in the way of luxury, is made up for by the vigorous massage inflicted. The bath was certainly most refreshing after my long trek of 600 miles through the hills.

Reference is made to hot baths in the *Rajatarangini* which shows that they have been used for many centuries in Kashmir. It is mentioned that—

‘There the rivers are free from danger and aquatic monsters, provided with warm bath-houses for the winter, and furnished with embankments.’

A large part of the population of Srinagar lives permanently on the river, and most of the European visitors occupy house-boats. The waterways and the river are the chief high roads, and there is communication by canal to every part of the city. Srinagar has been aptly called the Venice of Asia, and, within certain limits, she holds her own very well against the rival charms of Venezia. Her superiority lies in her swiftly flowing river; in the fine mountains and lakes which surround her, and in her old timber bridges which are as beautiful in their way, as even the Rialto. The *shikara* is as picturesque as the gondola. There is more life on the banks of the Jhelum when the people come down to bathe morning and evening, than there is on the Canal Grande. Indeed, half the population actually lives in boats. But there her supremacy ends. Srinagar has nothing to compare with the old palaces of Venice, with their rich statuary and mosaics, and their rows of painted posts rising from the water. Nor are her poor monuments worthy of notice in the same page with the

Piazza St. Marco.

To my mind the Jumma Musjid is quite the finest building in Srinagar. But since it is situated rather far from the river, and is, moreover, crowded round with bazaars, it is rarely visited. It is the highest mosque in Srinagar, but also the poorest and most delapidated. It once had a *jagir* of several villages attached to it for its upkeep, but this income was transferred by Ranjit Singh to some Sikh or Hindu temple and the Jumma Musjid is now very inadequately supported by voluntary contributions, and is consequently much decayed. It is a square building. The open court in the middle is occupied by trees and a small tank. From each of the four sides of the square, rises a tall wooden spire with a gilt top. These wooden steeples are a feature of Kashmir. The Shah Hamadan Musjid on the river is the finest example; and from the summit of the Takht-i-Suliman, as you look down over Srinagar City, you see a dozen or so of these graceful wooden spires, topped with gilt '*hitis*', rising above the meaner buildings.

The roof of the Jumma Musjid is supported by *deodar* pillars. The tallest of these are under the spires, and are about fifty feet high. Each is a magnificent column of wood. There are 380 pillars altogether, but there is a tradition that no one can count more than 379. The building has thrice been destroyed by fire, and the same pillars used again each time; so that, lofty though they still are, they are much shorter than they originally were, and are of smaller girth. The mosque was built by Sikundar .

but *shikan* (Alexander the Idol breaker) and so is about 600 years old.*

Outside the mosque the ground is littered with old graves, fallen stone pillars, and ruined temples. All Srinagar City is similarly scattered over with broken monuments, and in the walls of old houses and in bridges you see carved stones which have formerly belonged to still more ancient buildings. Near the Jumma Musjid I noticed a little miniature temple cut out of a single stone. Such model temples are very common. They are square in shape, with gables on each face and a pyramidal roof. The more important shrines, such as Pandrathan, Payech or Nagbal are in fact only more elaborate developments of the same type.

During my stay in Srinagar I came upon curious traditions concerning some of the tombs in the City. There is one tomb said to be that of Christ. Srinagar is full of ruins and tombs of great antiquity, which have quite lost their real history, but which have become instead the centre of superstitions. There is a grave on the slopes of Hari Parbat which is said to move down hill one yard each year. Many localities are supposed to be haunted by spirits. There is a stone in the Dal Lake which is believed to be a petrified *dhobi*, or washerman, who was turned to stone for telling lies. A rock near by is supposed to be a *gujar*, or shepherd, who sold diluted milk. It may be

* Neve says the Jumma Musjid was built by Zain-ul-ab-ul Din. The tomb of this famous King is a red brick pile on the river bank near the fourth bridge. He reigned for 52 years from 1417 A. D.

mentioned that these terrible examples have not deterred the Kashmiris from their evil ways, and if the gods reverted again to the same methods of punishment, there would be a good many bits of stone knocking round in Srinagar.

The Kashmiris are much given to pilgrimages. There appears to be something in the severe side of nature which appeals strongly to Hindu minds—as it certainly does also to Buddhists. The high mountains of Kashmir contain sacred spots which attract Hindu pilgrims yearly from the uttermost parts of India. The three most important of these holy places are Amarnath, Gungabal and Konsa Nag. Two of these are mountain lakes, situated amidst the eternal snows. Many of the pilgrims die of exposure, and all suffer great hardships from cold, even in mid-summer. I have visited them all myself, and shall mention them in the following chapters. The chief Mussulman shrine is Hazaratbal near the Nasim Bagh, where a hair of the Prophet is kept, and where the famous feast of roses is celebrated every spring. There is a striking difference between the pleasure seeking Mahomedan crowd, thronging out in boats across the lake to the festival at Hazaratbal, and the other crowd of Hindus, pressing up grimly through the passes to the terrible glacier girt lakes.

The vices of the Kashmiris—their untruthfulness, slandering, quarrelsomeness and cowardice have already been so well treated, that there remains little to be said on the subject. I think, however, it is unfair to expect too much from them ; though it is high time

that the effect of previous oppressions, to which these vices are attributed, was beginning to wear off. That excuse is becoming threadbare in these days of justice and good government. But when my attention was drawn to it, I was surprised to notice how large a proportion of the population have a debased shaped head. That accounts for much. They are borne degraded. A missionary was asked what he thought of Kashmiris he came in close contact with. "I love them" he replied, "but I don't like them." The Hindus are the superior class mentally. They are shrewd and sagacious as their co-religionists always are. They are the ruling class, and with even the limited education given them by State and Mission Schools, are already shaping into official supplying classes, with all the right qualities except honesty and tact. The Hindus have inflicted upon their effeminate Mussulman neighbours many of their prejudices. Of these the most trying to an agricultural country is the prohibition against cow killing.

The *manji*, or boatman community, are physically the finest people in Kashmir, and are a tribe apart by themselves. Humanity has reached about its lowest level in the great agricultural classes. I have never seen elsewhere such vacant, empty, expressionless faces, or such distorted, shapeless limbs, as amongst a herd of these human cattle, driven together into Srinagar to carry some great man's baggage up to Gulmurg. For these people there is no possibility of an awakening. Nothing good can come of them for many generations.

In other respects the awakening of Kashmir has already begun. It started years ago with a revision of the revenue system, the abolition of '*begar*', which was practically slavery for certain classes, the introduction of social rights and security, and the construction of roads, telegraphs and post offices, which are fast opening up the country. Lastly, Kashmir is now furnished with an up-to-date electrical plant, by which the river is being dredged to prevent the old disaster-dealing floods, and by means of which large tracks of swamp land are being reclaimed for rice cultivation. No doubt a railway will one day be a crowning boon—but when it is built, Kashmir will never again be quite such a glorious holiday ground as it was, and still is.

But there are fortunes still waiting to be gathered in. I sometimes picture the wealth to be gleaned from an efficient electric tramway or motor buss service connecting Baramulla, Islamabad, Sonamurg and Shupion with Srinagar, which would use some of the electric power now going begging. In my private scheme I picture the holiday crowds thronging the cars to Hazaratbal on festival days, and I have allowed for an express service of trams or busses which will travel 25 miles an hour, and which will join Islamabad and Baramulla to Srinagar, just as large suburbs are now connected to the chief towns of Japan by high speed cars. I am even prepared to run a line out to Kohala, which will gather in much wealth, while the authorities dilly-dally about a railway.

The year previous to this present visit, (that is in

1910) the Vale of Kashmir was visited by a terrible out-break of cholera, which attacked ten thousand people. Of these about six thousand died during the summer. The valley is very subject to such out-breaks. The whole of Srinagar is most insanitary. The streets are filthy, and the natives make no effort to improve their ways. Though tap water is laid on all over the city, the people prefer to drink from the dirty river, or the still more dirty canals. In the spring, large quantities of fruit are consumed, and in August the natives over eat themselves with melons. The result is that once cholera starts, there is no knowing where it will end. In the autumn too, Hindu pilgrims collect in great crowds to go up to Amanarth, and then disperse to all parts of India, carrying infection with them. On this occasion the population became seriously alarmed. Intercession services were held in all the mosques, the reputed walking stick of Christ, which is kept in the Shah Hamadan, and only exhibited on rare occasions, was brought out; and lastly the nation set itself the pious task of filling the dried up tank of the Sultan Shah Sahib's Mosque with water, in the hope that through the Saint's intercession, the epidemic might be stopped. It was a wonderful thing to see hundreds of coolies carrying *ghurras*, or jars, of water all the way up from the river to the tank. Men from all parts of Kashmir carried water from every simple village spring to help fill Sultan Shah Sahib's reservoir.

If an improper use is made of the reputed stick of Christ above referred to, it is said to bring on a flood.

Kashmir is very susceptible to flooding, since an enormous amount of water drains into the valley, and the exit through the gorges of Baramulla is too restricted to afford a sufficient escape. Electric dredgers are now busy clearing out the bed of the Jhelum there. Continuous and heavy rain, followed by hot sunshine, which melts the snows, are the most satisfactory conditions for a real good flood.

Such a one occurred when I was in Srinagar in the middle of September 1905. On that occasion there had been four days incessant rain. During the hot sunny days that followed the river rose to twenty two feet of flood. In Srinagar the water was only about a foot from the top of the *bund*, or embankment, which protects the European quarter, and great anxiety was felt as to whether the *bund* would stand the strain. From the top of the Takht, the valley looked like one huge lake. Every part of it was inundated, and the roads were only marked by straight rows of poplars, which stood out from the flood. It was the saddest sight to see the poor villagers vainly trying to gather in their crops of Indian corn, as the river rapidly rose inch by inch. Of course it was wasted labour, and the crops were swamped, though the poor people worked till they stood waist deep in the fields; and then withdrew sadly to higher ground.

On the river, quantities of timber and wreckage were washed down. Frogs, rats and snakes clung to logs. The snakes made frantic efforts to climb on board house-boats. One got into our boat, and was not killed until every board had been removed from .

the floor. We shot about a dozen more as they were swept past. These water snakes are not poisonous. A small rock python is found in the valley, and his tracks may often be seen across any roadway. The gunous and the pohr are the only venomous snakes in Kashmir. Even their bite is seldom fatal. In Pailgam several dogs were bitten, but recovered after having a few fits. The gunous, according to Neve, grows to three feet, and is dark grey with lozenge markings, and is ash coloured underneath. The pohr is a thin whip-like snake two feet long, dark brown in colour, and dull red underneath. Still even water snakes are unpleasant boat companions. As the flood rose, several derelict barges came sweeping down the stream, and were watched with no small anxiety till they were safely past our boat.

Late in the evening of the second day of flood, the *bund* began to show signs of giving way. Water had found its way through rat holes opposite the Punjab Bank, and an hour later a spout of water poured through, which quickly tore away forty feet of embankment. A wave swept in through the gap. The stampede which ensued was really rather amusing to watch. Horses and carriages were seen galloping away to the high ground round the base of the Takht-i-Suliman. Pianos, sofas, boxes, and all kinds of goods were hurried from the houses and thrust on to the *bund* or into boats. The price of food stuff rose in a few minutes to famine rates. A *doonga*, or any other boat, could demand any wage. The post offices and banks moved their chests into boats, and

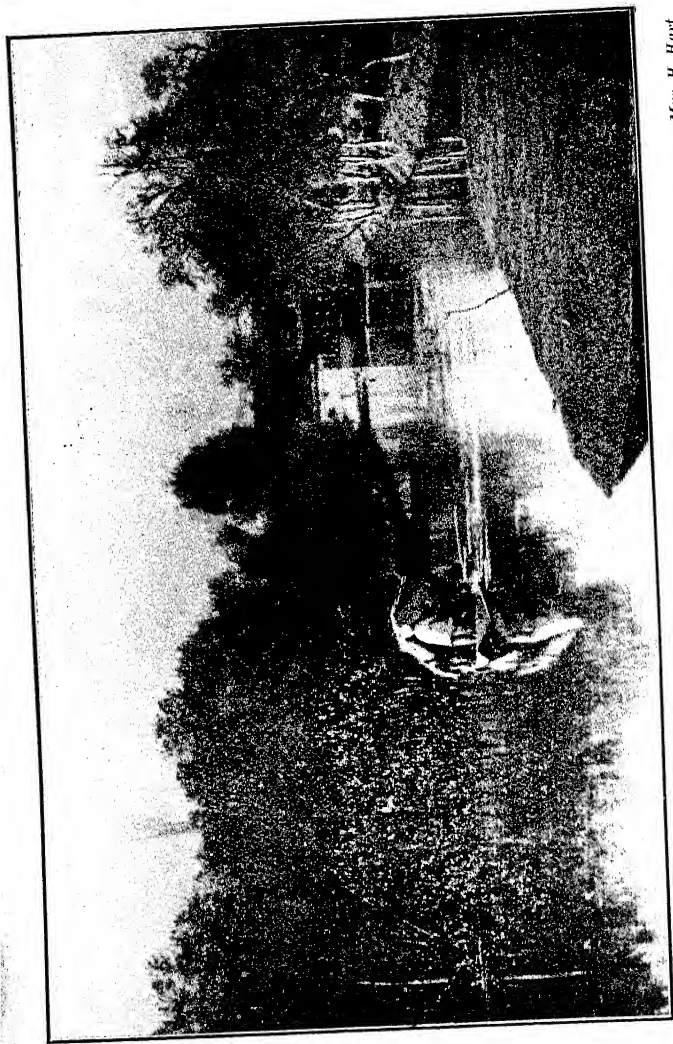
great confusion ensued. So darkness fell on the doomed city. In the night another section of the *bund* gave way.

By morning it was all over. The Jhelum was still flowing gently through the gaps, but the water inside the *bund* was nearly flush with the river, so that *shikaras* were passing in and out. People were stepping into boats from the first floor of Nedou's Hotel. The tops of the lamp posts just showed above water. Wreckage, railings, logs and dead chickens covered the surface ; and as we paddled through an orchard we picked up a boat full of floating apples.

It took Srinagar a month to dry up again, and the stench during that period was awful.

After my arrival from Kishtihar, I remained about a week in the Chenar Bagh, resting and enjoying the laziness and civilization of Srinagar. During this week there were no less than five earthquakes of which two were fairly severe. The last one was accompanied with a loud rumbling noise which lasted several seconds, and greatly alarmed the natives. Kashmir is noted for the severity of its earthquakes, and terrible havoc has been wrought by them several times. The crazy old native wooden houses are of course admirably suited to stand such disturbances. Of late, however solid stone houses are being built everywhere by both natives and Europeans. The severity of former earthquakes has been forgotten ; but it remains to be seen whether the use of stone will not prove a grave mistake some day.

I now moved my house-boat into the Dal Lake,



Mrs. H. Hart.

THE DAL LAKE.—"WE PASSED THROUGH WILLOW LINED CANALS."

Photo. by

which stretches out between the Takht-i-Suliman hill on one side, and the city and Hari Parbat hill on the other. We passed through charming willow lined canals, where trees and rushes were clearly reflected in the water. Villagers were busy working in their lake side gardens, where water melons and cucumbers would ripen. Here and there water was being raised by means of a jar, tied to a horizontal pole, the other end of which was weighted with a stone. Sometimes two or three men worked abreast, keeping time as they lowered the jar, filled it, raised it, and tipped it over with one foot into a trough.

Then came Cralier village with crowds of boats passing to and fro loaded with fruit, weeds and vegetables. Great barges stood in rows along the bank, their thatched roofs raised on sticks, to display the grain stored within. The silver roof of a temple flashed in the sunshine. Below it, grave pundits sat on the stone steps beside the water. Men crowded into the wooden bathing sheds which floated at the foot of a flight of stairs. Pretty women, surprised in their morning swim by our approach, fled up the steps struggling vainly with their garments. Others sought refuge in the water. The Punditanis are often very pretty, and are remarkably fair. They dress in brilliant orange, blue and red clothes, and wear a white cap on their heads. Standing on the steps, with their pretty colouring reflected in the water below them, they are often most picturesque. Cralier is the village from which the boatmen derive their cry of "*Cralier Balier*." They have innumerable such invocations to

help them row or punt, and one becomes very familiar with these after living a few weeks on the river. "*Cralier Balier*" is the commonest of these. Another is "*Yo pir, dast gir*" (Oh Saint, give a hand); and "*Ya Nabi, Gam Khas*" (Oh Saint of Hazratbal help us *); "*Ya Khuda, Ya Rasul*" (Oh God, Oh Prophet); "*Am posh, pamposh*" (lotus, otus), and so on. There are hundreds of them, and I collected about forty in my note book, which all had some interesting religious or geographical reference.† The Kashmiris are very fond of inventing and adding a rhyme to any particular word. "*Amposh, pamposh*" is an example. "*amposh*" means a lotus; and "*pamposh*" is merely added to rhyme, and means nothing. Rusla, my boatman on the "Diana," always spoke of the boat as "*kishti, wishti*", or of a kettle, as "*kettli, shitli*."

From Cralier we passed with some difficulty under the Niawidia, a low bridge with a Persian tablet, ascribing its origin to Akbar the Great. The arch is rather a tight fit for a big house-boat, and the "Diana" is one of the biggest on the river. And then we crossed the placid expanse of the lake to the Nishat Bagh.

You must have come through the hot foot hills, and toiled over the snow passes, to fully appreciate the peace and glory of the Dal. The first few lotus blossoms rose from its glassy surface. Men and women

* Hazaratbal is a mosque on the Dal near the Nasim Bagh. A hair of the Prophet is enshrined there.

† Another common invocation is '*Shukr Din, Nur Din*.' Sheikh Shukr Din is one of the most popular saints in Kashmir, and Nur Din was a disciple.

dabbled amongst the weeds gathering plants here and there till their boats sank beneath the load, and they were obliged to bale out the water with a few skilful scoops of the paddle. Beautiful grey herons stood motionless on floating gardens. Blue, short tailed king fishers poised in the air ready to drive, or sat fearlessly on the prow of the boat. White gulls flew slowly over the lake, and pale green fly-catchers sped up and down. Dragon flies, blue and bronze, chased each other, settling now and then on the lotus leaves. Beneath the boat wavy gardens of weeds swayed in the limpid waters, and little fish darted through the lake forests. Fishermen gathered up their circular nets and threw them into likely places. Others, prong in hand, glided gently along, gazing into the depths, and occasionally plunging their shafts down at a fish.

Crowds of people were ascending the Takht that day, for a festival was being held at the shrine on the summit. Opposite the Takht, across the lake, stood Hari Parbat, crowned with the bastions of a Mogul fort. The balconies and spires of a mosque occupied one end of the hill, and at the other was a Hindu image painted red.

On this occasion the Nishat Bagh was a blaze of petunias and roses; and the cherry trees were laden with fruit. Fountains played in the long tanks, and cascades of water fell murmuring over fluted stones.

But every season has its own charm. When the shores of the Dal are covered with yellow mustard the colouring is very delicate. In early spring the gardens and graveyards are bright with the most beautiful

purple and white iris, which grow to a great size. The scarlet tulips on roofs of mosques and houses are finer than any Dutch tulips. In many respects Kashmir more than holds its own against the rival charms of Japan. The iris of Japan are the better. But I often think with what delight the Japanese would crowd to Kashmir's cherry gardens, and with what gay festivals they would enchant the season of cherry blossom. Kashmir is perhaps most attractive when the orchards are white and pink with fruit blooms. There are miles of fruit trees near Gupkar. Later, the whole front of the Nishat is a blaze of lilac. In autumn the *chenars* are flaming orange and red. Then too, the natives strew scarlet chillies to dry on the roofs of their boats. The boat people will dry almost anything for winter use. Even cucumbers, and tomatoes are preserved in this way.

It was very delightful and very peaceful to lie on turf, eating cherries under the *chenars* of this old Mogul garden, and to look out over the Dal to the sunset. It was full moon that night, and as we sat on one of the old stone seats, the cascades and fountains ceased to flow. Scent of flowers filled the night air. The old Mogul garden was very silent and still, and only the plash of paddles came up to us from the lake below.

" The sounds from the lake—the low whisp'ring in boats,
 " As they shoot through the moonlight ;—the dipping of oars,
 " And the wild, airy warbling that everywhere floats,
 " Through the groves, round the islands, as if all the shores,
 " Like those of Kathay utter'd music, and gave
 " An answer in song to the kiss of each wave !

Next day we visited the Shalimar which is approached by a willow lined canal. It is a fine old garden, and the black marble pavilions are better than any buildings in the Nishat Bagh. But it is sadly neglected, and there is moreover no lovely view over the lake. Trout hatcheries have been established beyond the garden, and higher up the valley at Harwan, a large reservoir has been built, from which water is supplied to Srinagar. Stein has identified Harwan with Sadar—Nadvana, where a famous Bodhisattva called Nagar-juna is mentioned in the *Rajatarangini* as having lived in the days of Kanishka.*

In the evening we crossed to the Nasim Bagh, the "garden of delicious breezes," which was laid out by the Emperor Akbar. We camped there for some days upon a terrace overlooking the Dal, and amidst avenues of *chenars*. Before us stood the Isle of *Chenar*. Across the lake was the Shalimar, and above it rose the snow capped peak of Mahadeo.

The Hindu shrine which crowns the summit of the Takht-i-Suliman is believed to be the oldest temple in Kashmir. It was built about 300 A. D. during the reign of Raja Gopaditya, and is dedicated to Jyeshtheswara, an incarnation of Shiva. But the plinth is all that remains of the original building. The superstructure is much more modern. The *lingam* within is a fine bit of stone. A narrow flight of steps leads up to the plinth, on which the shrine stands. The view from the Takht over the Dal Lake and the city, to the Anchar Jheel is very beautiful, and on a clear evening the Woolar can be seen glittering in the sunshine.

* *Rajatarangini*. Book I. verse 173.

CHAPTER V.

KASHMIR—THE VALLEYS.

"The silence of the night is hanging over mountain and vale,
"The pale moon sheds her silver light upon the hushed and
 sleeping earth,
"The rushing stream from out the valley
"Sobs and sighs its mournful lullaby,
"While from the glorious space of Heaven, the twinkling stars
 look down.

F. A. E.

Narastan—Tar Sar—Liderwat—Kolohoi—Sekwas—Yamhar Pass
—Scind Valley—Tajwaz—Baltal—A landslip—Gujars—Ama-
nath—Panjitani—Pailgam—Ishmakam—Bawan—Martand.

After a thorough rest in Srinagar, we started off up into the highlands. It was by now the middle of July. By that time the climate of the river was unpleasantly hot, the flies and mosquitoes were a regular plague, and Srinagar itself was quite deserted.

We were towed up stream to Pampore, and from there marched *via* Pastan to Narastan, at the foot of the mountains. At Narastan there was an ancient temple, half demolished by the encroaching jungle. Its roof had disappeared, but the walls and the steps leading up to it were intact. Most of the engravings on the stone were defaced, but the ruin gave us an excellent idea of the ancient temples of Kashmir.

From Narastan we walked through some lovely wooded glens, crossing many foaming torrents. Then we ascended straight up the face of the grassy hill side, and camped high up on a ridge, where there was only just enough space for one tent.

Next morning we continued the climb up and up, till we reached a grassy shelving valley. Layers of heaped-up rocks, deposited, no doubt, by ice, lay in bands across the hills, and were rather troublesome to cross, especially for the laden coolies. Often a hidden stream could be heard babbling beneath the boulders. Such *débris* layers are the favourite homes of marmots. I never saw such perfect little fiends as marmots for delaying a march. One would pop up on the hill above and scream defiance at us, till we had to go up and waste half an hour trying to shoot him. Then just as we started off to hurry after the coolies, another family would run out on to their stone, and try and involve us again. It rained for an hour, and the wind was bitter as we climbed to the summit of the Tar Sar ridge. Then it cleared, and we lunched in the sunshine, on the pass, overlooking Tar Sar lake, at an elevation of 13,000 feet.

And what a view! Five hundred feet below us lay Tar Sar, a lovely tarn shaped like a half moon, nestling amongst craggy, snowbound peaks. A dozen cascades leapt from precipices into the lake. Small icebergs floated across it. First the water was brilliant turquoise green, but the colour varied every few minutes. Looking back from the ridge, up the shelving valley, we had come along, we could see an-

other tarn called Mar Sar, whose waters flow through Harwan into the Dal. We skirted the shores of Tar Sar on our way down to the first encampment of *gujars*. Milk and wood were available, but it was a bleak, cheerless spot, and squalls of rain drenched us before we got the tents pitched.

Two days later we reached Liderwat at the head of the Lidder valley. It is one of the most beautiful places imaginable. The Aru stream, swollen by the melting of the Kolohoi glaciers, comes thundering down the valley. The noise of rushing waters fills the ravine. The roar of the Lidder is the last sound of which the mind is conscious at night. Its music seems to penetrate into dreamland. Dark *deodar* forests crowd from the river banks up the mountains to a point where precipices rise grandly to the sky line; and there again more pines fringe the cliffs, like high masts etched against the blue. Here and there are clearings, where cows graze on the rich green turf all the summer. It is a place where you could paint and photograph for weeks with pleasure.

Its elevation is about 10,000 feet. We amused ourselves all the afternoon by dragging up fallen tree trunks, till we had made the finest bonfire I have ever seen. On top of the dry wood we piled green pine branches, which crackled cheerily, and threw up showers of sparks until far into the night. One day we made an expedition up to Kolohoi glacier. We had a good many streams to ford which were icy cold and knee deep, but otherwise the path presented no difficulties. At the spot where we had breakfast, we

discovered two large 'pot holes' in the Kolohoi stream. The water was churning big boulders slowly round and round in the holes. Ahead of us the peaks of Harbagwhan blocked up the valley. Three mighty glaciers hung from its flanks. In the foreground snow still bridged the torrent in places. We halted for the night near a deserted *gujar* encampment. The half demolished huts supplied us with fire wood ; but there were also plenty of birch trunks lying about, which had apparently slipped down over the winter snow from the heights about us.

Next morning we started for Kolohoi, which still remained hidden by intervening ridges. For some three miles the path led up the boulder-strewn valley, now passing over masses of rocks up along which we had to scramble, and now crossing rapidly thawing snow bridges, beneath which a glacial torrent roared. In front of us, the snows of Mount Harbagwhan gleamed in the bright morning sunshine. At its base lay the snout of the glacier we had come to see, and which had its origin around the base of Kolohoi. This snout was a dull-brown colour, being covered with a thick deposit of boulders and glacial mud. It terminated in a mound of rocks, strewn in disorder at its base. Between the boulders we were astonished to find quantities of white and mauve anemones and dainty primulas, which carpeted the ground and gave colour to the otherwise desolate scenery. Lower down we had found edelweiss, and the blue snow-poppy. But these were only a few of the plants that grew on these uplands. Alpine flowers covered the grassy slopes.

Having climbed up the face of the glacier to a height of some 200 feet above the valley, we continued our exploration along the ice. Half an hour's easy walking brought us to the edge of a difficult and scraggy formation. In front of us the ice rose in fantastic walls and fans, twenty to thirty feet in height, separated from each other by ugly gaps and fissures of uncertain depth. After many attempts to cross this ice fall at different places, we were forced to give up the attempt. Our next manœuvre was to try to reach the high bluffs overhanging the glacier on the right, but we found that the ice had shrunk away from the mountain sides, leaving a chasm fifty feet in depth and thirty feet in breadth.

There was nothing for it then but to retrace our steps until we were able to scramble on to the left lateral moraine, and from there climb up the face of the bluffs on to the grassy slopes above. Here again, the green turf was carpeted with a variety of bright yellow, blue and white flowers, rock-ferns, delicate columbines, tall Canterbury bells, violets, and quantities of rhubarb. The rhubarb, when cooked, made us excellent puddings. To the summit of these steep *murgs* was a matter of an hour's climb. At times progress was retarded by boulders, which were invariably collected together in vast heaps, while here and there in more protected folds in the grounds, snow still lay several feet deep. This proved, however, to be treacherous going, and after sinking in to an alarming depth, we preferred making long detours to escape the drifts.

Arrived at the summit, we were thoroughly repaid for the day's climb, by a wonderful panorama of snows, rugged peaks and glaciers. In the centre of the picture not a mile distant stood Kolohoi, a pyramid of dark rock, rising into the blue heavens to a height of 17,800 feet. In shape Kolohoi was not unlike the Matterhorn.

Its central peak was flanked by other snow-capped mountains, and to the left again was Harbagwhan. There are two main peaks which together form Kolohoi, but from this point only one of these was visible. So steep was it, that in many places the snow could not find a footing on those precipitous slopes, so that the great pyramid of rock was ribbed horizontally with bands of white. Kolohoi has never yet been climbed, though several attempts have been made with Swiss and Gurkha guides. From right and left of the main peak, swept two immense glaciers, which joining together, stretched down the valley up which we had struggled. Thus, on this side, at any rate, Kolohoi stood completely surrounded by a sea of ice. In the near foreground lay the left lateral moraine, some hundred feet in height, composed of ice-scored boulders, and other glacial deposits.

We scrambled down the slopes of the hill-side until we gained the level of the glacier. From here we struck off over the ice towards the main peak. This was not very difficult work, as in most places the face of the glacier formed a series of gentle undulations, though here and there crevasses of a lightgreen colour fell sheer away to great depths. An hour's walking

brought us to the very centre of this glacial sea, and here, on a stone, brought down by the medial moraine, we had hot tiffin off Calorit. This is an excellent food for such expeditions. It is carried in a tin, and by the simple process of punching a few holes and then rolling the tin about, the food is quickly heated by lime.

Although the morning had been so brilliant, clouds were now gathering round the high peaks, and the sky became threatening, so we hurried back to Liderwat, which we reached late in the afternoon. On the way we met a mad dog in the very narrowest part of the road, where a torrent on one side and a cliff on the other, made escape impossible. He brushed by us, snapping the air, but taking no notice at all of us, and headed for a glacier, where I suppose he perished.

On arrival at Liderwat we found the camp ready pitched, and our great bonfire still burning as merrily as when we left it two days before.

Upon leaving Liderwat we decided to cross over into the Scind valley by way of the Yamhar Pass. We marched to Sekwas, a desolate spot, where the valley divides into two branches, one leading to Jaji Murg, and the other to the Yamhar Pass. Very little fuel was available, and such as there was, was only green juniper, which smoked horribly. As usual, quantities of rock debris filled the valley. It was troublesome work crossing it next day. As usual too, the marmots delayed us, and it was midday before we got to the summit of the ridge, or pass, and from a height of 14,000 feet looked down over the Scind. Fifteen hundred feet below us lay Yamhar Nag, a cliff-girt

mountain tarn. We heaved several boulders down the shale and snow slopes, and watched them flying before a gathering tail of débris, till they plunged in amongst the small icebergs which floated on the lake. We thought it fine sport, until a *gujar*, whose sheep were somewhere in the invisible depths, yelled up to us in angry protest.

The downward path was blocked with snow, which was difficult to pass in one or two places. We had begun a drop of 7,000 feet, which was to torment our toes and knees for the whole of the next day. We spent the night near the tarn, at an altitude of about 12,500 feet. The scenery was most imposing. Silver birch and juniper clung to the steep hills about us, and below them pine forests fell away to the Scind river, 5,500 feet below. Next day there was no respite from the descent. The forests were luxuriant. Beneath the *deodars*, columbines and yellow and white violets grew thick. The columbine is undoubtedly the most dainty wild flower of Kashmir. On the hill sides, at a height of seven or eight thousand feet, it grows to a fine size. The flower is poised gracefully above its feathery foliage, and is sometimes a delicate mauve colour, and sometimes light yellow.

At length from far below, the whisper of the Scind river came up to us. It soon grew to a roar as we continued to descend. Sycamores appeared. Sounds from villages came to us. The valley was now so near that we could see people walking upon the Leh road. At last we camped at Koolan on the warm turf, amidst
 • walnut trees.

I need say nothing about the beauty of the Scind here. I shall mention it in another chapter. We marched up it, and two days later camped in the Tajwaz valley, behind (or to the south of) Sonamurg. Here we remained a fortnight. The Tajwas valley is divided into a number of grassy glades sprinkled over with great glacial boulders. The pine and silver birch intermingle, for Tajwaz is 8,500 feet. A noisy stream thunders down it. Four large glaciers poke their snouts into the upper end of the valley, and are fed from above by extensive snowfields. This beautiful spot happened, this particular summer, to be full of camps, as cholera had driven people together here from all the other valleys. Our kit was late in arriving, and in the meantime we were taken in and fed by friends.

One morning we climbed up to the third distant, and largest glacier. It lies three miles up the valley. Later on we found the river conveniently bridged with a sheet of snow, which was easier going than the rough boulders. Four or five streams flowed from the glacier, dashed down the smooth rocks, and disappeared under the snow covering of the valley bottom. These cascades were really very imposing. Every now and then, as the sun grew hotter, bits of ice fell away with a crash down the cliffs. We had lunch up on the glacier near some ice falls, and returned to camp in the evening. It is happy and healthy expeditions such as this, that make the memory of Kashmir so dear.

We left the Tajwaz in the middle of August, and set out to return to the Lidder by way of Baltal and



Mrs H Hart

THE TAJWAZ VALLEY

Photo by

the Amanarth caves. We dismissed our ponies at Baltal and took coolies in their place, since, at this advanced season of the year, the route we had selected was said to be difficult. The winter had happened to be a particularly hard one, so that more snow than usual bridged the torrent, and this fact alone enabled us to carry through our expedition so late in August. We were lucky too in getting some Ladakhi coolies, who were cheerful and willing, and thoroughly accustomed to difficult paths.

Directly after leaving Baltal we entered a ravine which runs up to Amanarth. One side of it was precipitous, and the other presented shale slopes, which proved difficult and dangerous whenever we had to take to them. This we had to do where the snow had fallen down into the torrent. The prospect of slipping into that wild stream, and being swept away under the snow, was not pleasing. It was wonderful how the laden coolies got along, and I confess that I felt very much, the responsibility of having urged them to come. However, higher up the snow was thicker, and the difficulties at first presented, were not met with again. Still, it was heavy marching. We left Baltal at 7 a.m. and had only covered twelve miles to Panjitani by four in the evening. We witnessed a fine landslip during the afternoon, luckily after we had all just passed the spot. A considerable portion of the hill side suddenly came away, and plunged into the torrent. A rain of stones and boulders continued to fall for nearly an hour afterwards.

At about midday we came to an encampment of

gujars. These poor people showed us every hospitality. They gave me some milk, and the coolies some bread. They refused money; but we were able to leave quinine for one of them, who was suffering from fever. The *gujars* of Kashmir are quite different to the rest of the population of the hills, and are descended from Pathan or Afghan stock. They speak both Pushtu and Urdu, but not Kashmiri. They are a big, bearded race. They loved striped clothes, like Pathans. Fine fellows they look, striding one behind the other along a narrow mountain path. I fancy though, that severe hill climbing often affects their hearts. Several cases of this came to our notice.

Although *gujars* are found all over the highlands of Kashmir, their immigration into the country is of quite recent date. The Pathan *gujars* of Bajaur and other districts, appear to have moved first into the Karghan valley in quest of new grazing for their flocks; and from there wandered into Poonch, when the Karghan became too populous. In Poonch they were subject to many taxes and disabilities, and so spread from there all over Kashmir, only about thirty five or forty years ago*. The *gujars* are a doubtful blessing. They do an immense amount of harm to the forests, which they always try to burn or clear away, in order to get better grazing. The consequence is that when once the forests have gone, the surface soil, which

* Neve mentions the existence of an Afridi colony, who live in a valley opening into the Lolab. He says :—" They are differently dressed to the Kashmiris and more manly, and with their long matchlocks, swords and shields they make a brave show."

has taken thousands of years to collect, is washed away by rain in a very short time. Experience shows that once the soil goes, it is never replaced again, and in time the rainfall and climatic conditions of a district are affected. The Kurram Valley, which was once covered with forests, and is now surrounded by bare rocky hills, is a good example of the damage *gujars* can do.

Amanarth lay to the north of our march this day, and I went up to the caves, while the followers proceeded direct to the camping ground at Panjitani (12,500 feet).

The valley of Amanarth is more worthy of notice than the cave itself. It is snow bound all the year round. Cliffs, showing a strangely contorted strata, shut it in. The cave is about one and a half miles up the *nullah*. It has a large square mouth about one hundred feet high. It is very shallow, and as a cave, is not worth looking at. It is, however, one of the most sacred places of Hindu pilgrimage in India. Two frozen springs at the back of the cave are supposed to represent *lingams* of Shiva. So bleak and arctic are the surroundings, that Amanarth gives the impression of being the very end of the world. Certainly man does not dwell beyond it.

'The cave is Shiva's mansion, a Titan's dwelling place. His roof a seventeen-thousand foot peak which thrusts a jagged flank into Ladakh. The god and his spouse Parbathi dwell within, congealed in the two frozen, green springs. These are the First Cause, the genesis of Energy. The primal *lingams* in which the

Essence of Shiva resides, the natural altar of his priests, though Amanarth, save at the time of the great pilgrimage, is a priestless shrine.*

Thousands of pilgrims flock up over the bitter snow every summer to offer their prayers here. Women desiring children consider it an especially holy place to pray at. His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir came up with the pilgrims in 1904, to ask for a son and heir. A son was born, but he died soon afterwards. The pilgrims suffer great hardships from the cold. Many of them are very scantily dressed, and rely on thin saffron robes, and an umbrella, for protection against wind and frost. They spend the last night at Panjitani, and on the way up over the ice to the cave next day, are said to throw off all their clothing. Flocks of pigeons live in the cave, which are supposed to be very holy. These fly out, frightened by the approach of the pilgrims, and are hailed as a manifestation of Shiva and Parbathi. Amanarth has an elevation of 13,500 feet.

Panjitani, where we camped, is an open glacial plain. Several glaciers descend to it from the surrounding peaks. One snowy dome looked rather like the Jungfrau. The strata of another were heaved up into a perpendicular position, giving it the appearance of a great ribbed monster. The Scind river has its birth here, and flows in a number of channels over the plain. The wretched shivering pilgrims bathe in each of these icy streams. All the channels converge into one swift tor-

* Blackwoods.

rent at the further end of Panjitani, and sweep down the Baltal valley through high snow cliffs. The many channels looked difficult obstacles in the evening when I inspected them for a likely ford. But after a long, cold night they had shrunk to almost nothing, and there was no trouble in crossing them when we started for Pailgam next day.

Pailgam is thirty miles distant, or two easy marches. The scenery is superb all the way. We intended to visit Shisha Nag, and thought we had done so, when we passed a small ice bound tarn. However, when we afterwards saw pictures of it showing high cliffs rising almost from the waters edge, we regretfully decided that somehow we must have missed the real Shisha Nag.

We stopped several days in the lovely pine clad valley of Pailgam. There were two or three camps still amongst the forests, but cholera had frightened nearly every one away. Usually about thirty camps are pitched there all through the summer. The Lidder stream is full of snow trout, and it is rather good fun to catch them in the evening; or if fish are scarce, to watch the *deodar* logs come charging down the stream.

Towards the end of August the Jhelum Valley again becomes pleasant, and the high valleys are deserted in favour of Srinagar. We therefore started for Islamabad, where the "Diana" was awaiting us. The first march is to Ishmakam. There is a pretty shrine above the village. Its lofty wooden balconies command a fine view over the upper end of Kashmir. The main

chamber of the shrine is a large cave, which goes back some distance into the hill. Next day we halted at Bawan, where the tents were pitched under some magnificent *chenar* trees. A large spring rises near by, and is received into a stone tank. Pundits feed the fish in it. There is also a small cave at Bomzoo, which is, however, of no particular interest.

We made a detour on our short march to Islamabad to visit the famous temple of Martand, which stands on the plateau, or *karewah*, of Islamabad, and commands a fine view over the Kashmir valley, to the distant walls of the Pir Panjal. Vigne declares that Martand is not less imposing than Persepolis. Though the temples of Kashmir are very ancient and very interesting, I personally am impressed with none of them, except Martand. Its lofty central building, its wings, its grand entrance, its quadrangle 250 feet long and 150 feet broad, surrounded with beautiful colonnades of 84 columns with trefoil arches between, are truly noble. Lastly, its situation at the end of the main valley, visible in the sunset for miles round, is masterful. In the architecture of Pandrathan, there is undoubtedly beauty and art, but the building itself is too small. Payech is also too much of a toy. Narastan, Avantipore and Wangat, though typical of the peculiar architecture of ancient Kashmir, are not in any way imposing. But Martand is magnificent.

The Kashmiris, of course, ascribe Martand to the Pandus, as natives always do any large monuments, of whose history they are ignorant. Martand was

completed in 735 A. D. * by the famous king Lalataditya who added the fine colonnades. The central group of buildings were erected by king Ranaditya in the fifth Century A. D. The extreme antiquity generally ascribed to the ruins of Kashmir is only another example of those errors of early writers, which have been so blindly and widely accepted. The roof of the temple is supposed to have been pyramidal, and the building must then have been about 75 feet high. The wall carvings have all been defaced, but the huge stones themselves defied the iconoclasm of the Mussulmans, though systematic efforts were made to destroy the temple. So Martand stands, still high and noble, facing the green vale of Kashmir and the pearly snows of the Pir Panjal.

At Islamabad we found the "Diana" ready for us. Khazra had also brought some magnificent pears which he said were plentiful in Srinagar at three annas a dozen. We therefore went to Srinagar as quickly as possible.

* This date has been fixed by Sir Aurel Stein, who translated the Kashmir history known as *Rajatarangini*.

MARTAND.

These old grey walls are dumb like stricken men
Striving to tell their tale, and die content ;
Whose speech has failed. Of what dim age, what men,
What Gods, are they the silent monument ?

Ravaged by vandals, and by earthquakes rent,
The sunset beating through the ruined gate ;
Man and his works are so impermanent.
To pass, and be forgotten, is our fate.

Where are the Gods, whose fallen altars face
The Pir Panjal ? Will they not angry be
At this neglect, and if no gifts are placed
Before their image, in the sanctuary ?

Or are they dead, like those of ancient Greece ?
Poor Gods ! once worshipped by adoring hosts.
They say their spirits haunt the moonlight peace,
And you can feel the presence of their ghosts.

Song of the Kashmir Tonga Road.

"Did you walk it?" Did you walk it
 Into Kashmir?"
 The champing of the tonga bar
 Speaks very clear.

"Chick chicker, chuck chicker
 Chick chicker chick,
 Chick chiker, chick chicker
 Chick chicker chick."

"Did you walk it? Did you walk it
 Up Murree Hill,
 And down to Kohala?"
 The tonga asks you still.

"Halt jogger; stop jogger;
 Which horse is which?
 Strain jogger; pull jogger;
 One in each ditch."

"Did you walk it, did you walk it
 Passing Dulai?"
 "No But a chunk of tongas
 Gone in my eye."

"Bolt jogger, jib jogger;
 Shy jogger, miss"
 "Ah! What a shave that was
 From the abyss!"

"Did you walk it; did you walk it
 Passing Ghurri please?"
 "Yes There's a landslip,
 And a pony broke its knees."

"Did you walk it; did you walk it
 Nearing Rampore?"
 "Such wonderous precipices
 I never saw!!"

"Bump jogger; jolt jogger;
 Hump jogger; bash.
 Lump jogger; thump jogger;
 Kick jogger; crash"

"Did you walk it; did you walk it
 After Baramul?"
 "No. I prefer a *doonga*.
 —So would any fool!"

CHAPTER VI.

KASHMIR—KONSA NAG.

Dear, when our table is spread,
Our Yakdahn, I mean
And each on our little camp bed,
The dishes between.
Would I change for a Lord Mayor's feast?
Or a Dieu-donné spread?
Ah! no, they don't tempt me the least,
I choose this instead.
We're waking before it is day,
When the mountains and snow
Are standing out solemn and grey,
And the little stars show.
Then sudden the highest peak glows
With the kiss of the sun,
In glory of gold and of rose,
The day is begun.

“In the Camp.” (Stockley.)

Ahribal falls—Bridges—Valley of the Veshu—Mahinag—Konsa
Nag—Kangwatan—Kulgam—Lower Veshu.

Konsa Nag is one of the largest mountain lakes in Kashmir. It is not quite so fine an expanse of water as Gangabal, nor is it overhung by such imposing glaciers. But it is considered very sacred by the Hindus, and is the object of a yearly pilgrimage. The scenery of the Pir Panjal was much admired by the

traveller Vigne, who visited Kónsa Nag as early as 1835. We approached it from Srinagar, marching south to Ramu over high plateaux, or *karewahs*, which they say, were formed by deposits on the floor of the great inland sea, which occupied the Vale of Kashmir before the barriers at Baramulla were rent asunder by some upheaval. However formed, the *karewahs* are exceedingly ugly, and it was pleasant to drop from them to the pretty village of Ramu, where our camp, which we had sent forward the day before, was already pitched in an orchard. From Ramu to Shupion we travelled by the old Mogul road leading to the Pir Panjal pass, and we noticed by the way, several ancient brick ruins of caravan *sevais*, built by the Emperor Akbar.

On another occasion, in 1907, we tried to reach Kónsa Nag much earlier in the year, but all the bridges were washed away, and the streams were so much swollen by melting snow that we were obliged to turn back. Thus defeated, we returned to Srinagar by another route along the lower ranges of the Pir Panjal to Yausi Murg. The scenery amongst the pine forests was very beautiful. Yausi Murg itself was a great expanse of turf, upon which many little lakelets had been left by the melting of the snows. Such clearings amongst the forests are common on the northern slopes of the Pir Panjal, and any one wishing for quiet camp life amidst superb scenery, could not do better than to take his tents along the cattle tracks of Yausi Murg. From there we descended to Nil Nag lake which is not particularly pretty. Srinagar is two easy marches distant.

But later in the year the journey to our first objective, Konsa Nag, was much easier.

A few miles beyond Shupion we entered the hills, and overlooked the left bank of the Veshu river, which just below Sedau leaps over a ledge into a basin, forty feet below. The Ahribal Falls are very imposing, especially early in the year, when there is plenty of water in the river. At present, in early September, the volume of water was much less than in April. High precipices rise above it, from which, they say, many a Hindu has cast himself into the boiling whirlpool, five hundred feet below. One would imagine that suicide involving an awful leap into a waterfall, would be a terrible way of ending life. Yet it is often resorted to. I have quoted another case in Chapter I. In Japan it is a favourite way of quitting the world, and is perhaps preferable to another Japanese method—namely jumping down a volcano.

Our camp was pitched at Lad Gasan, a fine expanse of turf where several *gujars* graze their cattle and sheep in the summer. We had to cross the Saldwas stream, which had washed away its bridge. It was quite a formidable obstacle, and it was with real thankfulness that we saw the last of the ponies stumble and plunge safely to the other side. The bridges in this part of the Pir Panjal consist only of logs thrown across the stream where the channel is narrow enough. They are so low that a slight rise of the torrent washes them away. Nowhere else in Kashmir did we have such difficulty in crossing rivers, or were we called upon to face such unpleasant bridges.

Next morning we had a stiff climb during which we lost our way; for the paths in the Pir Panjal are very rough, and branch off at all angles. However, by great fortune, as we topped a ridge, we came upon a *chaupan*, or goat grazer, who pointed out the open *murg* of Ram Kasun, which was where we should have gone. Crossing the *murg* we left the tree limit; though much further up at Chuttarnar we found a large clump of sycamores in a sheltered part of the valley. These trees were remarkably healthy considering the altitude. The valley of the Veshu, which river we had again joined, was bleak in the extreme. The log bridges were broken down, and the stream quite unfordable. Moreover, most of the *gujars* had gone down, as it was already early September. Such few shepherds as still remained across the river at Mahinag, turned their backs on us, and steadfastly refused to notice our signals for help. Luckily for them we never did get across at that particular point, though by keeping up the left bank we still managed to reach our objective—Konsa Nag.

Opposite our camp at Mahinag were three small lakes, which gave forth a large volume of water. Yet another stream, nearly equal in size to the Veshu itself, joined it a mile higher up, gushing out from the mountain side. The Veshu too, which has its rise in Kosna Nag, does not flow from it above ground, but comes out through three tunnels in the face of the lake's barrier, and about five hundred feet below the level of the tarn. Satpokriañ was a flat plain, half covered with boulders, and half with sippy turf. The

Veshu issuing from its tunnels, spread itself in deep, still pools, and flowed by many shallow channels over this plain, before again collecting to rush madly down the glen. From here we climbed the barrier which on this side shuts in the lake. At first there was a path, but we soon lost sight of it, and ended by clambering over beds of enormous boulders. This delayed us a good deal, but after a couple of hours we descended the far side of the barrier, and were rewarded by a glorious view of the lake.

Konsa Nag is a fine expanse of water. Every few moments it changed its colour with the varying shades of sunshine and cloud. First it was deep blue, but later assumed a rich turquoise. High, gaunt mountains shut it in on all sides, rising steeply from the water's edge. The lake is a mile and a half long, and half a mile wide, and is said to have an elevation above sea level of 12,800 feet. In that case, the barrier we crossed must be considerably over 13,000 feet. At the further end, the lake has another exit, so that its waters flow down either sides of the Pir Panjal range, and feed both the Jhelum and the Chenab rivers. We had lunch up there, and returned to our camp opposite Mahinag, in time for tea.

We were now spared the ignominy of returning by the same way we had come, by the discovery next day of a bridge across the Veshu, several miles lower down. It proved just strong enough to carry our baggage ponies. We had no definite idea which route to take, but by always doing the exact opposite to what our so called guide suggested, we got along very well.

He was a silly old man we had picked up in Shupion as we passed through. Following this method, we reached the *murg* of Kangwatan—a truly beautiful stretch of turf upland, worthy one day to become a second Gulmurg. Its undulating grassy expanse lay amidst pine forests, overhung by the magnificent triple peaks of Konsa Nag, which stood out jagged and bold above it. We followed the hills eastward for about six miles to Chirumbal, passing through forest glades and over many grassy clearings, all of which tempted one to pitch camp on them. On this march we flushed a snipe—the only game bird we had seen the whole way. The explorer Vigne must have used this track on his way to Zoji Murg, and was well pleased with the beauty of the scenery. There were two logs thrown across the Chirumbal stream, upon which the baggage ponies walked fearlessly, though of course, they were unloaded, and the kit man-handled over.

We camped at Chirumbal, and next day climbed the ridge to the south, over which ran the path to Mazgam in the main valley of Kashmir. From the top of the hill there was a fine view of the Pir Punjal extending from the Ghulab Garh pass in the east, to the triple peaks of Konsa Nag, and the Budil pass, and so on westward to the uplands of Tosh Maidan in the direction of Gulmurg. In the valley we found the people busy cutting the rice and Indian corn, shaking down walnuts, or cutting willow branches to make into baskets. In autumn only the naked trunks of the willow trees are left. The hay in these parts is twisted into

skeins and hung up in the trees till required in winter. We were told that a big walnut tree produced from two to three thousand nuts, and these gave six or seven seers of walnut oil. The walnuts were sold locally at one anna a hundred—the finest nuts you could wish for. There is a Government tax of eight annas on every walnut tree.*

From Hanjipora we walked to Kulgam, and thence on to Kaimu. Kulgam is a big village and the headquarters of a *tahsil*. It is one of the few places which sent no water to fill the tank of Shah Sultan Sahib's Musjid in Srinagar. The filling of this tank, as mentioned on page 101, was a national penance to avert the cholera epidemic of 1910. Water had been carried to it from every corner of Kashmir, but there is a saying that the tank can never be filled until Kulgam has sent its quota : and Kulgam is unpatriotic. At Kaimu we again met our old friend and enemy the violent Veshu river. But here it flows so placidly between willow-lined banks, that our house-boats were able to meet us. Along this stream there grows a rank weed which looks like a nettle. This is really *bhung*, the seeds of which are collected and yield *charas*, the most harmful and popular drug of Northern India. *Bhung* is produced from the leaves. The skin of the stem is used for making rope and string. Boat-men say that if they tow all day through the *charas* plants, they are quite overcome. They also told us that on this stream one's sleep at night is very deep, and that in the morning one's

* One anna equals one penny ; and a seer is 2 lbs.

eyes are swollen from the presence of *charas* in such large quantities. This we found to be the case. So we dropped down to Songam, where, at the junction of the Veshu with the Jhelum, the fish jump merrily. Here we fished for a day. Then in the evening after dinner we cast loose, and drifted down stream through the moonlight to Srinagar.

CHAPTER VII.

KASHMIR—GUNGABAL & NUNGA PARBAT.

Wangat—Rajdainbal Ruins—Tronkol—Haramuk—Gungabal Lake—Loolgool—Sirbal Nag—Erin—Tragbal—Rajdaingan Pass—Gaurais—Kamri Pass—Rattu—Nunga Parbat—The Burzil—Accident on the Burzil—Return to Kashmir—Autumn—Manasbal.

We remained in Srinagar till the last week of September, and then took the boats round to Gunderbal. There was not much water in the Scind by this time, as the summer heat was over, and very little snow remained to melt.

From Kangan, which is one march up the Scind, we turned into the Wangat Valley with the intention of visiting the Gungabal Lakes. The scenery was very pretty. At another time (in June) the Wangat is a mass of pink roses, which have even clambered into high trees, and hang in festoons about the path. But on this present occasion we had bad weather. A thunder storm swept down upon us just as we got to Wangat. We took shelter in one of the houses in the village, and quickly discovered what wretched places they are. The water soon poured through the roof into the top storey, and from there cascaded to the ground floor; so that the whole place was like a

shower bath. However, as the camping ground was also flooded, we had to spend the night in the top verandah of the house, hanging up our tents all round to keep off the wind. The quantity and variety of animals we took away with us next morning will not bear talking about.

Luckily that was the end of the bad weather—and the fresh bright autumn climate of Kashmir set in, with all its usual brilliant colouring.

Next day we proceeded up the valley to some old ruined temples, called Rajdambal—all of the truly ancient Kashmiri style, and all more or less overwhelmed and thrown down by the invading jungle. These ruins belonged to the Avantivarma period. On the roof of one, a tall pine tree had grown up. There was one building, now almost entirely destroyed, which I measured and found to be 57 feet square. The bases of sixteen pillars were visible. Two stone water-tanks, one of which was thirty feet by forty, still remained almost intact.

From these ruins our path led straight up the side of Haramuk, for a sheer four thousand feet of grassy slopes. I was quite exhausted when at last we got to the top, and began to follow a more level track. We were in the uplands again, with high peaks around us. It was curious to watch how mountains act as magnets to the clouds, which begin to form about midday. White mists generated in the low valleys, and slowly climbed up and banked themselves round Haramuk.

We halted for a while at Tronkol (10,800 feet) and waited for the coolies, who arrived in the early after-

noon. Then we made our way over grassy, undulating downs towards the lakes. There is a large copse of silver birch at Tronkol, and we all took as much wood with us as we could carry, as none was procurable beyond this point. The downs, or *murgs*, were easy going. They were really the grass covered moraines of ancient glaciers, which belonged to a period when the Haramuk glaciers extended right down into the Wangat Valley. Erratics lay strewn about everywhere—all smoothed and polished by ice action. Some of these great ice carried rocks were of immense size. Above us rose Haramuk, now again free from clouds—huge, cold and hoary in the evening light. We camped for the night at a small lake near the base of the peak. In fact the cliffs of Haramuk rose from its very shores, and once during the night a large avalanche slipped from an overhanging glacier, and fell into the lake with a loud roar. We had some difficulty at this late hour of the evening in getting over the stream which issues from the tarn, as it was by now much swollen by the days melted snow. But we managed it somehow, and camped on the far bank.

The night was exceedingly cold, and Haramuk looked very grand and ghostly in the moonlight. We camped at 11,300 feet.

We were driven to an early start next day by the cold. I myself felt too cramped to remain in bed, and the servants and followers were in a hurry to get away from these Arctic regions. So we set off in the direction of the Erin Nullah. We shortly came upon Gungabal lake, and skirted its shores for about one

and a half miles. The lake is nearly half a mile broad. Its colouring was as beautiful and as varied as that of Konsa Nag or Tar Sar. But it seemed a finer lake than either of them, because of the towering walls of Haramuk which rose above it.

Two great glaciers over-hung it, and supplied it with the icebergs, which were driven across it by the wind. This lake, like Amarnath and Konsa Nag, is a sacred place of Hindu pilgrimage. Its waters of course flow direct into the Jhelum, but the Hindu legend maintains that the stream which leaves the tarn joins the Ganges.

Gungabal is specially visited by those who have lost relations during the year. The pilgrims carry up the knuckle bones or ashes of the deceased, and cast them into the lake.

After two hours walking we crossed a ridge above the lake, and from the summit took our last look back at Gungabal. We then skirted a small lake called Loolgool, which was entirely covered with ice, except just round the edges. We had by now been walking some hours over snow. The landscape was entirely Arctic. A little sleet fell, and mists kept sweeping across the mountains; I have seldom seen anything so dreary as these wastes of snow. No living thing was visible. The icy wind cut like a knife.

We crossed a second ridge, and entered another dip, with yet another frozen lake in it, called Sirbal Nag.

From here our guide led us upwards over shelving slopes of snow to a low gap in the crest line, about 13,500 feet, which might be called the Erin pass. The

ascent was steep. At the top, a cornice of ice, eight feet high faced us up which we cut steps. But once on the top, the geographical situation—of which I was by now quite hazy—cleared up.

Away below us lay the Woolar, sparkling in the afternoon sunshine. There were long slopes of snow immediately beneath us, and down these we and the baggage coolies were able to glissade. This saved a lot of time and trouble, and enabled us to descend far enough down the hill before dark, to get milk and firewood. And we certainly did enjoy our bonfire that night. The place was, I think, called Gonaspatri.

The Erin Nullah is very beautiful. It is a favourite valley for black bear shooting. Next morning we descended to Bandipore and rested there a couple of days, making preparations for the expedition to Nunga Parbat.

Late in the year, that is when the passes are not encumbered with snow, the journey to the base of the Nunga Parbat, the world's fifth highest peak, is perfectly simple. There is a good bridle path all the way, and at most of the stages there are huts. The ascent from Bandipore to Tragbal is easy. It is a place one can spend a month in very pleasantly in summer. The views over the Woolar are fine, the pine forests attractive, and water, once scarce, is now easily obtainable. The following day we resumed the climb until the forests ceased, and grassy slopes took us

to the top of the Rajdiangan pass. (11,900 feet). The road at the summit is almost level for two miles. It is along this open stretch that many wretched travellers and *dak* runners are yearly frozen to death in winter by blizzards. Small huts are now placed for their use at the most dangerous points. However, in summer there are no dangers of this kind. The turf land and flowers, and the glorious view over Kashmir are superb.

We descended thence to Gorai, and next day, crossing the Kishengunga river by a bridge at Kanzalwan, reached Gaurais, which is one of the favourite summer retreats of Kashmir.

The scenery of Gaurais is considered by some people to be as fine as any in Kashmir. I myself do not think so, and was disappointed with the bareness of the surrounding mountains.

The valley is five miles in length and two in breadth ; and the Kishengunga winds its way through large expanses of grass land, about which a few huts are dotted. Gaurais village consists of several clusters of dilapidated houses, distributed about the vale. But the pride of the place is its imposing limestone cliffs, which shut in the valley on all sides. The further end is blocked up with a great pyramidal mountain, the lower portions of which are clothed with pines, but its pink summit rises bold and naked to a height of 14,000 feet. The favourite camp is in a poplar plantation at the Kashmir end of the valley ; and here several tents may always be seen in the summer, for Gaurais, once so secluded and unfrequented, is rapidly rising

in popularity. The conveniences of a post and telegraph office, and the benefits of a dry bracing climate, and an elevation of 7,800 feet above sea level, are attracting many visitors. The rest house, a comfortable stone building, is situated two miles beyond the poplar plantation, and near a ramshackle fort which crowns a low hill.

The Kamri Pass (14,050 feet) is crossed two days later. The silver birch struggle for existence on its lower slopes, but otherwise it is treeless. The view from the summit facing south is grand. It is the last look into Kashmir. The deep blue and green hills, extend range upon range to a thin line of distant snow; and in the valley below the sunshine is dispelling the white clinging mists. Northwards, the prospect is over Astor territory. Bleak, treeless *khuds*, and lonely boulder strewn valleys make a striking contrast with the verdure of the Kashmir side. One realises that the Happy Valley of Kashmir is indeed an oasis in the wastes of Asia. And Nunga Parbat, now very much closer, rises out of the chaos of crags and rocks. There is usually some snow on the Kamri all the summer, but in September this is turned into a disgusting slush, through which one must wade ankle deep. The descent on the further side is precipitous, but the path is fairly broad. Kala Pani has an elevation of some 11,000 feet, and the cold at night in that enclosed valley, is intense, even in midsummer. Firewood is procurable in small quantities, and rhubarb grows on the hills. There is, however, no bungalow and we pushed on to the rest house at Shankargarh. This

made a total march of 25 miles from Gaurais over rather trying country.

Rattu is 17 miles further down the valley. The descent is gentle, and the road crosses the Kamri torrent by a good bridge. Nunga Parbat, its base still hidden by intervening ranges, is visible straight ahead. Rattu is the summer head-quarters of a portion of the Kashmir Imperial Service Troops, whose barracks are scattered over the expanse of rolling table land, on which also the rest house is situated. Everything is green and fresh in Rattu, and is in pleasing contrast to the arid surrounding. The call of the bugle, and the discordant sound of drum practice of the Kashmir regiment quartered there in summer, are welcome sounds after the unutterable silence of the Kamri.

The superb view of Nunga Parbat—the reward for this trek over the mountains—is obtained five miles beyond Rattu, from the wooden bridge at Chorit. An early start has to be made, for Nunga Parbat clouds over by eight or nine o'clock in the morning even in the finest weather.* Quite suddenly the barrier of ugly low hills is withdrawn, and from the bridge we gazed up at the unspeakable grandeur of a sheer 14,000 feet of snow. The great wall of Nunga Parbat is about thirty miles long. The whole stands exposed to view like a great hog's back, a full 10,000 feet above its neighbours. The range rises to a height, above sea level, of 26,629 feet. No one peak stands up

* Whereas the high peaks of the Alps often cloud over in the evening, those of the Himalaya are clouded all day long, but clear in the early morning and evening.

high above the rest, but rounded domes heave upwards here and there. The tracks of avalanches can be seen on its white gleaming face. Thin whiffs of mist flow from the summit like smoke, across the blue of heaven; and even as you watch a curtain of cloud sweeps down over that ethereal picture, and hides it from view till the evening.

The far famed Rupal Nullah, up which we looked from Chorit bridge, leads to the very glaciers of Nunga Parbat. It is a rough journey, but is well worth the trouble. There is a miserable collection of huts at Tarshing, near the Tarshing glacier, and beyond this the Rupal Nullah bends round under the southern shoulder of Nunga Parbat. In Astor the natives call Nunga Parbat, Diyamir. In Kashmir it is called 'Nunga Parbat,' or the Naked Mountain.

We marched on to Gurikot in order to return to Kashmir by a different route—namely by way of the Burzil Pass. Astor was only seven miles distant from our camp at Gurikot so we rode over to see it. It is, however, without any interest. Next night we halted at Goodhai. On the way we came across a Kashmir traveller, weeping beside the road. It appeared that his pony had become lame. The prospect of facing the Burzil with a lame beast was not pleasant, but it was so comic to come upon this grown man loudly weeping, that we could not help being amused at him. However, we were able to assist him to some extent, and he got over the pass all right.

We made an early start from Chillum Chowki for the pass. At this time of the year (early October) it

presented no difficulties. The road leads through bleak shelving valleys, shut in by rugged mountains. The top is some miles long. The telegraph wires are run high up on the hill sides so as to be out of the way of avalanches; but even in spite of this precaution, they are constantly being broken in winter. The travellers' shelters at the top of the pass are placed on piles, thirty feet off the ground. This gives an idea of the depth to which snow accumulates. Before these huts were provided, there was constant loss of life and limb on the Burzil. In 1891 a whole detachment of sepoys was frost bitten while crossing, and even now, the *dak* runners are occasionally overwhelmed by avalanches.

A nasty accident happened near Burzil Chowki in April 1906. Two young officers were trying to push over the passes too early, in order to secure the best shooting *nullahs* in Astor. They were held up by storms at Burzil Chowki for some days, and eventually decided to retire down the valley until the weather should improve. Hardly had they started on their return journey when an avalanche swept down, and buried all their twenty-five baggage porters. The officers with their tiffin coolie only just escaped, and suffered great hardships and exposure, before they had finished their forty mile retreat over the snow back to Bandipore. I happened to cross the Burzil in the middle of July that year on the day that the melting snow gave up several of its victims. It was a ghastly sight. Eventually all the bodies were recovered, and also most of the baggage, including guns and rifles. A subscription was raised for the benefit of the

families of the unfortunate coolies.

We returned by easy marches to Bandipore, and thence travelled by boat back to Srinagar where we got some duck shooting; before it was time to return to India.

The Kashmir Valley had by this time assumed its autumn appearance. The climate was bracing and cold, and the sunshine brilliant. Everywhere the colouring was vivid. The poplars turned golden yellow, and the *chenars* became at first bronzed, and afterwards flaming scarlet. I shall never forget a three days tour we made of the Dal lake, before leaving the country. The three hundred *chenars* of the Nasim Bagh made a most wonderful display. Across the lake, the rich colouring of the trees of the Shalimar and Nishat were faithfully reflected in the water.

Early in November we regretfully left Srinagar and dropped down the now sluggish and shrunken stream of the Jhelum *en route* for Baramulla, where *tongas* were ordered to take us back to India. We spent some time over the river journey, shooting duck every evening. Thousands of ducks and geese were arriving in battalions and wedges from their Central Asian breeding grounds across the mountains. We stopped a week at Mansabal lake shooting *chicore* along the ~~Aha~~ tang and the higher hills above. Manasbal is the deepest, and some people claim the most beautiful lake in Kashmir, but personally I far prefer the Dal. Nevertheless Mansabal is charming. Its open expanse of water is quite free from weeds. At the entrance is an

old Mogul garden, and at the far end of the lake several noble *chenars* afford good camping ground. Stone is quarried from the village on the Aha-tang shore. Aha-tang hill itself has the shape and appearance of some pre-historic monster.

The Woolar was by this time much shrunken, and the river ran far out into the lake between high banks. Ponies waded about in the water a full mile from the shore, brousing on weeds. Heaps of *singhara* nuts were collected near the villages. A kind of bread is made from the *singhara*, and Government derives a considerable income from them.

We tied up near Dubgao where there is a splendid grove of *chenars* to camp under. The Phoru river from the Lolab joins the Jhelum at this place. Dubgao is a great wood depot. Two great electric dredgers were at work deepening the river channel. The rumble of machinery and the glare of electric light all night over the dark Jhelum, gave quiet Dubgao a very busy appearance.

It is believed that by clearing the exit of the Jhelum, the surplus water will pass more easily from the valley, and so reduce the chances of floods. Besides these suction dredgers, there are powerful grappling machines which remove obstructing boulders lower down. Efforts of a similar kind were made long ago. The town of Sopor is said to be named after Suyya, an engineer who attempted to widen the Baramulla gorges in about 800 A. D.

CHAPTER VIII.

LADAKH.

A Meteor—Upper Scind—Zoji La—Matayan—Irrigation Canals—Mulbek Lamaserai—Polyandry—Temporary Marriages—Himiskot—Chortens—Prayer-walls—Lamayuru—Khalatsi—Leh—Zanka Gompa—Himis—The Mystery Play—Chang La—Tanktse—Pang Kong Lakes—Changpas—The Nobbok La—Tangyar—Lhabap—The Diger—Return to Leh.

I visited Ladakh in 1907, so that I must ask my readers to skip back four years from the point where the journey through Kangra, Kulu, Chamba and Kashmir concluded. I left Rawal Pindi on the 28th of March, and travelling by *tonga* up the Jhelum valley road, reached Baramulla in Kashmir on the evening of the 30th., with no more serious adventures than the usual snow on the Murree hills, and the usual landslips in the neighbourhood of Ghari and Chacoti.

Kashmir had assumed a very different appearance at this early period of the year to what it is in the summer. The trees were quite leafless, and everything was completely lacking in colour. But almost from the edge of the Woollar lake, as we passed over it, the snows rose up on all sides, culminating in the great triple peak of Haramuk. Dazzling silver reflections of the surrounding white wilderness of hills lay over the burnished steel mirror of the lake. All day we .

sat in the sunshine on the prow of the *doonga** trying to keep warm, and in the evening we hired *shikaras*† and went out on to the *jheels* after duck. Vast flights of duck and geese were still wheeling over the swampy marshes which border the lake, unable as yet to cross the snowy mountains to their breeding grounds in Central Asia.

The first afternoon, while it was still broad daylight, we saw a bright flash of light across the western heavens, which afterwards proved to be a meteorite which was noticed, in spite of the sunshine, all over India—even as far distant as Calcutta. The head of the meteorite was exceedingly brilliant, and after it had disappeared, a long column of white smoke remained in the sky for several minutes. The falling star was reported by a traveller to have come to earth within a few miles of Baramulla; but though search was made, it was never found.

We proceeded slowly up stream to Srinagar, shooting, and enjoying the beautiful scenery. Heavy and incessant rain fell during the last fortnight of April, and then, when the floods produced thereby had subsided, the weather got rapidly warmer. The trees burst into leaf, the river banks were covered with gorgeous purple and white iris; and masses of great scarlet tulips flamed on the earthy roof of every shrine. At the end of May the short but delectable strawberry

* Visitors in Kashmir live permanently in boats. The *doonga* is a craft with thatched roof and matting sides.

† The *shikara* is a rowing boat, used when on the lakes, or when going shopping or shooting.

season began ; and with it came a cholera epidemic, to act as a check on greediness.

At this period I was kept busy with preparations for my journey into the highlands of Ladak, or Western Tibet. Stores had to be brought up from India, sufficient for a four months' march. *Yakdans* and *kilters* had to be purchased and carefully packed ; clothes for both the hot valley of the Indus, and the Arctic cold of the mountains had to be provided ; and servants and animals had to be selected. My Afridi orderly, Sharbat Khan, who had accompanied me on many an expedition, came up from Jhelum and joined me in Srinagar. Finally the caravan, which consisted of seven men and six baggage ponies, started from Srinagar on the 28th of May. I followed it on the third day, and joined it at Kangan, in the Scind valley, to which place I had laid a *dak* of ponies.

The scenery of the Upper Scind valley is considered as fine as any in Kashmir. I certainly have seen none finer except in the Wardwan, and in places at the head of the Lidder. The Scind narrows above Goond. On either side the mountains rise, spur upon spur, from the river. For many miles the defile is enclosed by towering buttresses of rock, and by imposing precipices, down whose faces cascades of water leap from a great height. As usual, the southern wall of the valley, which faces north, and so does not get too much sunshine, is much better wooded than the other. Dense forests rise for thousands of feet, starting in the valley with walnuts and mulberry, and rising through well marked zones of sycamore and pines to

the more hardy birch and juniper, which lie beneath the last high grassy slopes.

From the trees that like aneroid show,
Your height from the sea,
You've only to look and you'll know
How high you may be.

First ilex and silvery birch,
Then sycamore, fir,
Ah! Nature repays our research,
If we listen to her.

(Stockley.)

The pines in most places form a dense fringe along the crest of the cliffs, and sometimes even crowd upon ledges on the face of precipices. Occasionally, where a ravine joins the Scind, you can look up a glen presenting the most savage appearance imaginable. Several rough tracks lead over the mountains to the south. One easy one from Haieen drops down into the Shalimar gardens on the banks of the Dal lake. Another from Goond, which we have already followed, crosses the Yamhar Pass into the Lidder valley.*

The bottom of the Scind is well wooded with walnut, sycamore and hazel; and the road most of the way runs through pretty glades and amongst huge fallen boulders. Glimpses of the foam flecked river, surging over the rocks are continually obtained, and sometimes the road runs along precipices, the bases of which are washed by the torrent. At Sonamurg we camped at the furthest end of the *murg*, beyond the post office. Sonamurg itself is, I always think, a most

* See pages 116 and 117.

disappointing spot ; but the valley of Tajwaz to the south of it, which I mentioned on page 118, is one of the finest ravines in Kashmir. A good deal of rain fell in the afternoon, but the night was clear and cold, and next morning we had to wait for an hour till the sunshine had thawed the ice on the tents.

We reached Baltal, at the foot of the Zoji La on the 1st of June.*

From the *chaukidar* at the rest hut I learnt that several travellers had recently been detained some days there, owing to the soft state of the snow. Later, in the afternoon, I walked half a mile up the pass, and come to the conclusion that the summer route looked the most feasible, But the local guides were still in favour of the winter route, and so we set out in the early dawn the following morning, keeping down in the *nullah* bed over the snow. The Zoji La is the lowest depression in the great chain of mountains which lie between the Nunga Purbat group and the mountain mass of Zaskar. It is, except after a heavy fall of snow, open to foot passengers even in winter, but the crossing then is dangerous. Just now there still remained enough snow along the *nullah* bed to permit of that route being used. The ravine was very narrow. Its gloomy precipices towered above one, to a great height. The first and only real difficulty was encountered near the foot of the pass, where a mass of snow had subsided into the torrent, carrying with it our road. However, the ponies were seized by bridle and tail and hauled and pushed somehow over the obstacle,

* The word 'La' means a mountain pass.

without mishap. The ascent beyond lay up a steep curtain of snow, where the path zigzagged from one wall of the *nullah* to the other. Here constant halts were necessary to gasp for breath, to adjust a shifted load, or to pick up a fallen pony. One beast, carrying my tent and bedding, seemed possessed with an evil spirit, and kept us in a constant state of anxiety by courting crevasses and by bumping into his fellows. However, he came to grief before long, and in his fall carried Sharbat Khan, and my camera with him, for a distance of 20 yards. Now and then we passed the skeletons of ponies, which told mutely how the pass had claimed its victims; and further on, at the very summit, eight empty snow graves, a few rags, a cap and some grass shoes, marked the spot where the goddess of avalanche had taken her toll in human life. This tragedy occurred two months before, but the bodies of the victims of the disaster had only lately been excavated and buried. But our luck was good. The snow was in excellent condition; and by the time the rising sun touched the crests of the defile, we were scrambling over the last hillocks, towards the summit. Here the ponies slipped and fell every minute, but once at the top, the ravine turned abruptly to the east, and we entered a broad, snow-bound valley, down which we made our way to Matzahoyan shelter hut, and from there on to Matayan. Knight, likens the Zoji La to a gigantic step from the valleys of Kashmir to those of high Tibet. It is a peculiarity of the pass that the descent on the further side is very gradual. The Zoji La is 11,300 feet high. The tiny

stream, which now appeared, quickly developed into the rushing torrent of the Dras river. We crossed and recrossed it several times by means of snow bridges, most of which had already begun to collapse. Marmots were the only living animals in this desolate valley. They are called *pya* in Tibetan, and the Ladakhis believe them to be the re-incarnation of spiteful persons. They came out as we passed and sat on the boulders above their homes, screaming shrilly till we got near, and then bolted into their holes.

The last part of this exhausting march, from Matzahoyan shelter to Matayan, seemed interminable. Most of the time we were walking over snow, which began to soften towards noon; and later, when we had descended lower, the path lay over rough stones, with slush ankle deep concealing them. The water of a hundred trickles collected on the path. At last we came to a large *maidan*, or plain, at the further end of which was the village of Matayan. There was a good hut there, but I preferred to pitch my tents—a decision I soon regretted, as a bitter wind arose in the evening, and continued to blow down the pass all night. The head man of the village was a friendly little person, who informed me that he was half Yarkandi and half Baltie, a mixture which he considered very desirable. He said that in winter snow buried Matayan to a depth of thirty or forty feet; but this was not really an inconvenience, since by covering up the village, it protected it from the fury of the winds. The inhabitants of Matayan have a fine contempt for the Kashmiris on account of their timidity. The Ladakhis they

said, if overwhelmed by an avalanche, would dig for their comrades so long as there was any hope of their being alive ; but Kasmiris always fled and abandoned their unlucky fellows. This is quite true as far as it concerns the Kashmiris ; but I doubt if the Ladakhis are really any better. Two years before in the Scind, a European gentleman fell into the river. Several Ladakhis watched him clinging to a branch until he became exhausted, but made no effort to help him. The poor fellow's body was found three days afterwards at Gunderbal. Later on, in the next chapter, I shall be able to give a glaring example of the way Baltis abandon their stricken comrades.

Between Matayan and Mulbek, a distance of four marches, we crossed the districts of Dras and Purig, which lie between Kashmir and Little Tibet.* Never was there a country so arid, so absolutely desolate as this. We passed for four whole days, down narrow valleys, devoid almost of a blade of grass or a shrub of any kind. Rugged, naked crags rose on either hand, from whose sides everything that could fall had already fallen, and lay in heaps of debris along the valley bottom. The path threaded its way with difficulty between great boulders. One hears of Tibetan aridity, but unless you have seen it with your own eyes, you can form no conception of how desolate, wearying and depressing a landscape can be.

The cause of all this barrenness is, that the air, in passing over the high mountains which separate

* Ladakh is known also by the names of Little Tibet, and Western Tibet.

Ladakh from Kashmir, is deprived of every particle of moisture, so that the rain-fall in Little Tibet is practically nil. Whenever a little moisture can be obtained from a stream, the fertility of the granite soil is quite surprising. Every few miles one suddenly comes upon an oasis of surpassing freshness and beauty. Around the villages lie small patches of emerald green fields, where willows and poplars make a pleasing contrast with the surrounding desert. The best of these oasis is at Kharbu, where I pitched my camp, beneath apple trees, now in full blossom. The system of irrigation in this country is very wonderful. Without water nothing will grow, and as I have remarked, the rain-fall is nil. So the people have captured streams high up under the melting snows and conducted the water in canals to their villages. Some of these canals are many miles long. Their track across the mountain side is marked by a fringe of vegetation ; and where they terminate the ground is laid out in fields, where crops flourish exceedingly. These canals follow every retreating *nullah* and protruding spur, and leading, as they often do, over unstable shale slopes, or along the face of precipices, must require extraordinary patience and ingenuity to build and repair.

Drass is a large village scattered over an open plain. There is a telegraph office there ; and polo is played on the *chongan*, or polo ground, on holidays. I was lucky enough to find some fresh ponies here, and so was able to dismiss those which had accompanied me all the way from Kašmir.

Kargil was another big village where supplies were

obtainable. We had now descended again to 8,700 feet, and the climate was warmer. Indeed, the sun's rays were intensely hot in this rare atmosphere. On the other hand, it was much too chilly in the shade. So it was impossible ever to be absolutely comfortable. But in this part of Ladakh I never experienced those terrible daily winds, which rise in most places at ten in the morning, rage all day long, and die away again in the evening. From Kargil to Mulbek was a long hot march of twenty-three and a half miles. On the way we passed through the village of Shargol.

The monastery at Shargol was the first object to warn us that we had already entered a Buddhist country. The *Gompa*, or *lamasevai*, was built into the face of a cliff; a most undesirable and inaccessible site for ordinary mortals, but, without doubt, sufficiently grotesque to please the Lamas. Mulbek is a little further on, and here we halted for one day, pitching camp on the little polo ground, beside the Wakka river. I found the Joint Commissioner of Leh, also camped here, and although he was an inconvenient travelling companion, inasmuch as he left a perfect famine of pony and coolie transport behind him, I can testify both to the warmth of his hospitality, and the excellence of his cook. The *Gompa* of Mulbek is perched on the summit of a rocky hill, which rises five hundred feet above the village. After some hesitation, I decided on a pilgrimage to this airy haunt of Buddhism. The climb up to the monastery was steep and rough. I found the good Lamas seated on the roof in placid inactivity, perhaps contemplating

Nirvana. But more likely their mind, like the chart by which the hunters of the Snark steered their ship, was a perfect and absolute blank. I was greeted with the kindly "*jooli jooli*" which in this land is the substitute for *salaam*, and the monks led me by many narrow stair-ways into the upper story of the *Gompa*, where, at the further end of an open court-yard was the image house. The Ladakhis, like all other Buddhists, do not object to strangers entering their most sacred chambers, or watching any religious ceremony. The Buddhas were mostly made of brass, displaying exquisite workmanship, and were ranged in rows upon an altar, before which burned several butter lamps. These lamps were made of brass or copper, and contained rancid butter, upon which a smoky flame fed. The walls were hung with silk and canvas scrolls or banners, upon which were painted different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, including the Gautama Buddha himself, Pladen Lambo, and the blue god, Devi—a frightful monstrosity, depicted in acts of vice. Several books were ranged on a shelf, each bound up in a cloth, and secured between two bits of painted wood. In another chamber, which contained a large *chorten*, or sarcophagus, the walls were painted with different religious subjects; and, elsewhere I found a number of little drawings of the six holy signs of Buddhism. These are the umbrella of royalty, the fish, the vase, the conch shell, the wheel of life, and the gordian knot. The gordian knot is said to represent the unending succession of births, which must run until perfection brings the spirit unto *Nirvana*. The use of

the fish as a Buddhist symbol is interesting, since the Nestorians, who spread over Central Asia, used the fish as the sign of Christianity. The letters of the Greek word 'Ichthys', a fish, are the initial letters of the words Jesus CHristos, THau (of God), Yios (the son), Soter (the Saviour). Hence a fish was used as a secret sign of the faith by early Christians, and is found scratched by Roman Christians of the second century on the walls of the catacombs at Rome. The fish has also been introduced by the Chinese into the symbol of the *Yang* and the *Yin*. There are so many points of similarity between the Buddhist and Christian Churches, that the connection cannot possibly be due to mere coincidence. For example, Buddhism like the Church of Rome deals with bells, rosaries and relics. In both, intercessions, processions, litanies, celibacy and tonsure of monks are practised. Holy water is used in Buddhist churches; and the Buddhists have a complete system of monasteries for monks and nuns. The Pope of Rome has a considerably smaller following than the Dalai Lama of Lhassa, who, for the Mahayama* at least, is a deity on earth. Nor does the parallel end there. The stories of Christ and of Buddha have many points in common, and the similarity in spirit of the Christian and Buddhist teaching is almost startling.

The Lamas were jolly, flat faced, Tartar-eyed, little men. They took a pride in showing everything. All

*The Mahayama or Greater Vehicle, embraces the Buddhism of Tibet, China and Japan, as distinct from the Lesser Vehicle of Burma and Ceylon. The Dalai Lama is held by some to be an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Avaloketishvara.

the Lamas of Ladakh belong to the red order of monks. Those of Tibet belong to the yellow sect. As soon as I left them, they resumed their seats, and their contemplations, and recommenced twirling their prayer wheels.

At the further end of Mulbek is a huge figure of the god Chumba, carved upon a rock, that stands near the road. The figure is about twenty feet high, and has four hands. It dates, according to Cunningham, from 1620 A.D.

I have brought away many kindly feelings towards the people of Ladakh. But it is impossible to associate closely with their lower classes. The dirt of the Ladakhi is really monstrous, but at the same time one can make allowances; for the climate of the country is so uncomfortable that while there, you yourself neglect many little habits of cleanliness which you have always been accustomed to practise. The Ladakhi coolies are hardy and willing. Though they are no fonder of a job of work than any one else, they stand by whatever agreement they have made. Very rarely did my Ladakhi coolies desert in the night. Any little kindness I tried to show by giving them tea after a hard climb, or a sheep when we halted for a day, was always appreciated, and not made a subject of complaint, as in Chamba. The Ladakhis are merry, simple, kindly folk, and I think on the whole a credit to their religion, even though it is a very corrupt version of the Buddha's 'fourfold path.'

Perhaps the most extraordinary custom practised by the Ladkhis is polyandry, by which a number of hus-

bands share one wife. It is usual for a Ladakhi bride to marry into a family of brothers. The eldest brother becomes the chief, or senior husband, and alone goes through the form of marriage ceremony. In taking a wife he ties the matrimonial knot, not only for himself, but also on behalf of his two next eldest brothers. The children of such marriages acknowledge all the husbands as fathers, speaking of their elder or younger father. The bride has the right of marrying again, outside the family ; and in the event of there being no offspring from the first triple marriage, a friend may be called into the family circle. On the death of the eldest brother, the wife can, if she wishes, sever her connection with the junior husbands. The women of Tibet, far from being the drudges of the family, are usually its leading members. They are on the whole, more bold and spirited than their men-folk. Where she has no male relatives, a girl can inherit property ; and an heiress can, if she likes, elect to marry only one husband at a time. Where the bride is wealthy, the bridegroom has but little to say to matters concerning the household ; and misbehaviour or disobedience on his part may evoke the wrath of his spouse, who can get rid of him straight way, without any form of divorce. This kind of husband is called *magpa*, and since his lady may turn him out at any moment, and marry elsewhere, the poor *magpa*'s position is rather precarious.

It is the custom in Leh for traders and others to contract temporary marriages during their stay in the country ; which, after a stipulated period, and after

the bride and her relations have been propitiated with presents, are dissolved by mutual consent of the contracting parties. The children of these temporary (and to the mind of the Ladakhi entirely honourable) marriages, form a very large part of the population of Leh, and are called Arghons. In character, they are superior to pure Tibetan; and in cases where the father has been a Pathan or a Yarkundi, they are very sharp, useful fellows, whose services are much sought after by sportsmen and travellers. The system of temporary marriages exists, I believe, in Yarkund also.

The marriage ceremony in Ladakh is as expensive an affair as in other countries. Presents are given and feasts held. But the poorer members of the community, who cannot afford these expenses, get over the difficulty by arranging an elopement, which however, is fully approved of by the bride's parents. The run away couple thus become man and wife, without any further trouble. Divorce is very common in Ladakh, and is procurable on the flimsiest pretext.

The system of polyandry, obnoxious and revolting though it seems to us, is, perhaps excusable in the Tibetan. It is the instrument by which nature keeps within bounds the population of a country unable to support any more inhabitants, and whose geographical position renders emigration impossible. The Ladakhi is unable to stand a hot climate. Even in Kashmir he suffers from fevers, So there is no possible outlet for a surplus population. The same necessity prompts a monastic system under which numbers of women

enter nunneries, and thousands of priests are bound to celibacy. No less than one sixth of the population of Ladakh take holy orders.

Mulbek was the first *really* Buddhist place met with, and beyond this point strange monuments, strange customs and a strange people offered unending interest to the daily march.

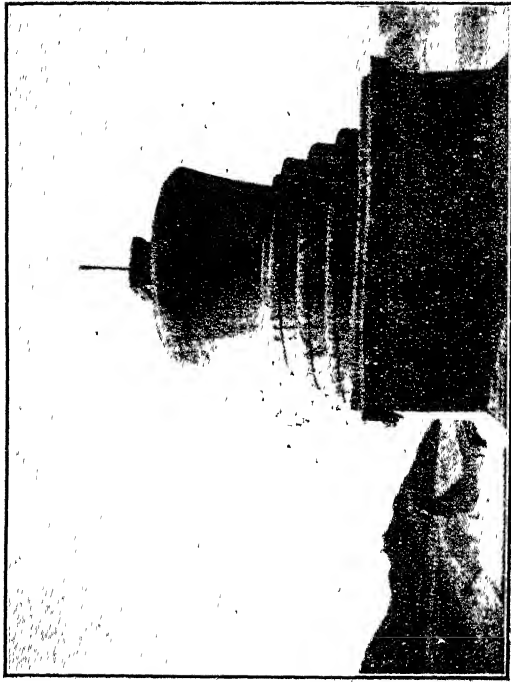
Leaving Mulbek we began the ascent of the Namika La (13,000 feet) and from it descended to a place called Kharbu (the second Kharbu), which has an elevation of 10,890 feet. The Namika La was exceedingly easy, as also was the Foti La (13,400) which we crossed next day. Although both these passes are considerably higher than Zoji La, they were quite unencumbered with snow; and the climb to their low shale summits is not severe. Nevertheless they are fatiguing to the traveller fresh from the comparatively low regions of Kashmir, for this reason, that the rarity of the air at first causes the greatest distress. Personally, I found a steep climb at 14,000 feet in Kashmir less trying than a gentle ascent at 13,000 feet in Ladakh. In Ladakh the permanent snow line is about 17,000 feet.

The view from the top of the Namika La was very fine, and was all the more pleasing since hitherto we had been enclosed in a valley, which presented no objects of beauty. The climb over the Foti La next day was less present, as a keen wind was blowing; but I found shelter for breakfast at the top behind a large *chorten*, from which hundreds of small praying flags were fluttering. On the way up I passed several

earth pillars. In many places, where the shale cliffs had been denuded, tall columns remained standing, upholding boulders of various sizes. The crests of some of the shale ridges tapered up to a thin wedge, which was certainly not six inches broad at the top.

Shortly after leaving Kharbu, I passed the little village of Himiskot, which was a thoroughly typical Tibetan habitation. The houses were crowded together along the crest of a cliff. On a still higher crag, were other buildings, which looked for all the world like the castle on the enchanted hill, in some absurd children's fairy book. These sites are chosen merely for effect. The desire for protection from hostile attacks has nothing to do with it, since the placid, good natured Ladakhi has no enemies. It is simply an inordinate love of the grotesque and fantastic which weighs with these people. The water question must be a difficulty, but I suppose in this cold climate the inhabitants do not require to drink much, and washing is a luxury with which they entirely dispense. The dirt of the Ladakhis is appalling. They hardly ever touch water. They are infested with vermin, and leave a scent behind them like a fox. It is literally a fact that in Rupshu, where water freezes at night even in July and August, the people are washed but twice—the first time when they are born and the second, and last time, when they are dead. The statement, incredible though it may appear, I believe is absolutely true.

But before proceeding further I must explain the



CHORTENS AND A MANE WALL NEAR LEH

This wall is over a mile in length

meaning of a *chorten* and a *mane*. These monuments line the road everywhere, and cluster in great numbers round every village. A *chorten* is really a sarcophagus, or tomb, of a Lama. I am not sure if the rich laity are not buried in them too. But as the mere fact of building them is merit, it does not always follow that ashes or relics are deposited in them, and they are sometimes empty. They consist of a square base, upon which rises a rounded building, shaped like a bell, and above that again is a tall pole, or a ringed pillar, usually painted red. They are built of mud, and are to be seen in every stage of decay. The shape of the modern *chorten* is derived from very ancient times, and is simply a development of the old *stupa* mounds of India which were used as monuments for depositing relics in early Buddhist days. The same structure is still employed in nearly all Buddhist countries, and may be seen in the pagodas of Burma, and even in the tombstones and stone lanterns of Japan. A gigantic *chorten* forms the main gateway into Lhasa city: The Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon is really nothing more than a gigantic *chorten*.

The different parts of the *chorten* are symbolic, and illustrate Buddhist myths. Mount Meru stands on five terraces, and so *chortens* are placed on five terraces too. The number is sometimes reduced to three for the sake of economy. The three palaces of the Buddha had respectively five, seven and nine storeys of roofs, and this is why Burmese *pagodas* have five, seven and nine roofs and Tibetan *chortens* that number of rings above the dome. The relic chamber

is usually bell shaped or cylindrical, and is surmounted by a circle or an octagon. The circle is the indigenous Chinese symbol for heaven, or sky. The octagon represents the Earth, or else Tushita Heaven, the lowest Heaven, where the Buddhas reside for a while before descending to earth. Maitreya, the future Buddha, is now awaiting there the appointed time for his mission to the world.

In Ladakh, the bodies of dead Lamas are burnt, and the ashes having been mixed with fine clay, are stamped into various shapes in wooden moulds. The two most usual shapes for these ash moulds are a miniature *chorten* and a figure of Buddha. There are other and more elaborate designs; and one which I was lucky enough to procure, bears an inscription, which an authority in Lahore has declared to be at least one thousand years old. These remains—which curiously enough are called “Potted Lama” in the Tibetan language—are buried in the *chortens*.* In the case of poor people who cannot afford to build a new tomb, the figures are thrust into the cracks of an old *chorten*, from which they can easily be taken out. Many travellers take away a few with them as curios, but a missionary in Leh told me that conscience stricken people sometimes send him back these ashes in after years, with a request that they may be replaced where they came from.

A *mane* is a praying wall, or more correctly a ‘praising wall,’ for strictly speaking the Buddhists do not pray. Its height varies from two feet to ten

* A more correct name is Tsa-cha.

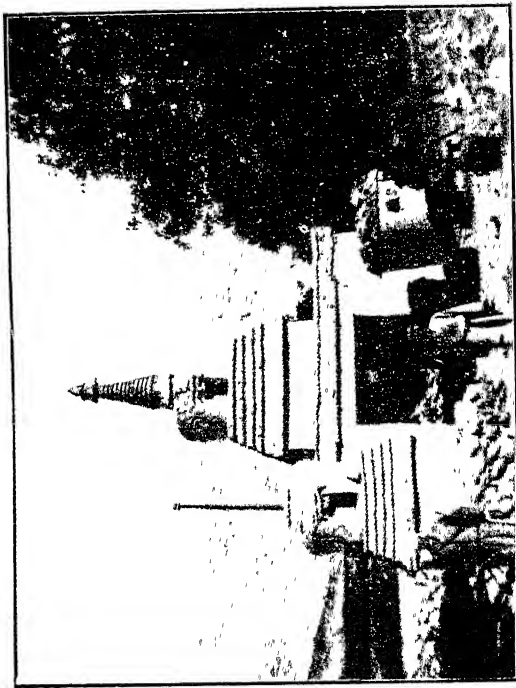
feet, and its length from a few yards to a mile or more. These walls are faced with engraved stones. Some of the inscriptions are of great length, but the most usual one, is the '*om mane padmi om*' (oh! thou jewel of the Lotus, oh!). The name of these walls is taken from the second word '*mane*' of the inscription. No one starts upon a journey, or undertakes any enterprise, without first placing an inscribed stone on the village *mane*. By passing a *mane* with the right arm inwards you invoke luck. For this reason the roadway always divides in two on reaching a *mane*, so as to accommodate travellers from either direction. At each end, and often also in the middle of these walls, rise one or more *chortens*. The idea of *mane* walls is said to have been introduced by a celebrated lama called Stag-tchang-raz Cheng who lived in the sixteenth century.

In the case of carved Buddhist frescos, the order of the pictures is always from right to left as you face them, so that people walking round the building they adorn, may follow the stories, while moving in the correct direction i.e., with the right arm inwards. This is a very ancient Buddhist custom. The same order was adhered to even in the ancient frescos of old Gandhara (Peshawar), which date from the first century of our era. In Gandhara art there are only three or four known exceptions to this rule, and if you know the story represented, the sculptor's mistake is at once noticeable.

I have already mentioned that 'praising wall' would be a better explanation of the *mane*, than the

usually accepted term 'prayer wheel'. The word 'Prayer wheel' is also an unfortunate term which has been the cause of a good deal of misunderstanding about the so called method of 'praying by machinery.' To begin with, pure Buddhism does not recognise such a thing as prayer at all. Buddha did not admit the power of any God to save humanity. He himself was an 'example,' but not a 'Saviour.' Man must save HIMSELF by good '*karma*' (actions). Prayer therefore is useless. The Buddhism of Tibet is of course a sad corruption of that taught by the Gautama, but this point about prayer is a most important one. No true Buddhist could believe in the use of prayer. It is entirely opposed to Buddhist thought. *Sutras* and '*Refuges*' are regularly repeated kneeling before the images, and this muttering of texts has been mistaken for prayer. An examination of this universal sentence of Tibet '*om mani padmi om*,' will show more clearly than anything else that it is *Praise* and not prayer, which the ignorance and zeal of Tibetan Buddhists has reduced to machinery. *Om* means 'Holy,' or 'Oh.': *mani* is 'pure' or 'precious': *padmi* means 'in the Lotus flower'—the sentence being popularly translated 'Oh ! thou jewel in the lotus flower,'—evidently a cry of praise. There are four kinds of praise wheels, namely those turned by hand, those driven by water, those driven by wind, and those of great size which stand in passages and doorways, and are set spinning by every passer-by.

The village of Lamayuru is situated at the foot of the Foti La. Its approach is striking. The



A CHORTEN NEAR LAMAYURE

road for more than a mile is lined with *chortens* and *manes*. At the entrance of the village is a large cluster of these buildings. Some of them are pierced with an archway, beneath which the path runs. The interior of these arched *chortens* is frequently ornamented with frescos of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The religion of Ladakh is very corrupt. Many of the demons who belonged to the former religion of the country have been retained as Buddhist Bodhisattvas. This has resulted in the creation of a vulgar pantheon of fierce godlings, utterly opposed to the Buddhist idea.

In one *chorten* I noticed two figures with large sweeping wings, such as popular fancy gives to our angels. It is usual to find stucco ornamentations round the base of a *chorten*, with figures of flying horses in deep relief. It brought to mind similar beasts found commonly in the statuary and frescos of Ancient Gandhara (Peshawar), in which case the idea was drawn from purely Grecian sources. The Buddha figures of Gandhara became the prototypes of all other Buddha figures throughout the East. Greek influence we know extended right across Asia to China, and therefore it is not surprising to find strong traces of it in the Buddhist art of Ladakh.*

Lamayuru village is huddled at the base of a cliff, and on the very brink of the precipice overhanging it, at a height of 150 feet above the village, is the *Lama*-

*The picture of the whale which swallowed Jonah, is represented on the walls of the Catacombs at Rome (2nd century A.D.) as a winged horse, exactly like similar beasts found in the frescos of N.-W. India and Tibet.

serai. The cliff is deeply seamed with fissures, and these are in some cases bridged over by the *Gompa*, or sometimes even built into. Never was there such an insecure, and utterly undesirable site for a large building. The effect I must admit was pleasing. I visited the *Gompa* in the afternoon, and found it occupied by a dozen jolly looking Lamas, all dressed in the red robes of their sect (the order of Di-kung). Lamayuru was far finer than, and in many respects different to, the monastery of Mulbek. The idol chamber was spacious, and contained some large images. It was hung with silk scrolls, embroidered and painted with figures of Buddhas and dragons. In another room, the walls of which were painted from floor to roof, was a beautiful statue of the god, Chan-ras-zik. It had eleven heads and hundreds of arms. The body, the two ordinary arms, and the head were well proportioned; and the figure, which was standing upright against the wall, was undeniably graceful. In a large circle, all round the image, were hundreds of arms radiating in the most ingenious manner from the body. I consider this Chan-ras-zik quite a work of art. The Dalai Lama is believed to be an incarnation of Chan-ras-zik, or Avalokita. Avalokita is usually recognisable by his lotus rosary and vase, and is the same Bodhisattva as Avalokitisvara of the ancient Greeko-Buddhist statuary in Gandhara (Peshawar). In later Gandhara statuary, the Bodhisattva Maitreya is nearly always shown with a flask, and Avalokitisvara with only a lotus flower, and these are the only two Bodhisattvas recognised in ancient Gandhara.

Still more interesting is the connection which can be traced between this Tibetan Chan-ras-zik and Kwannon, the goddess of mercy, who is one of the most important Bodhisattvas of Japan. Kwannon has 33 incarnations, one of which is Avalokitisvara. Therefore Chan-ras-zik and Kwannon (the Kwan-yin of China) are undoubtedly one and the same. If further proof were needed it can be found in the fact that the Japanese Kwannon (like Chan-ras-zik) in her incarnation as Sanju Kwannon, has also eleven heads and a thousand hands. One form of Kwannon in Japan has a horse's head. Mr. Peter of the Moravian Mission in Leh, to whom I wrote further information on this subject, furnished me with the following notes. "Chan-ras-zik" he says "is one of the chief gods in Ladakh. His name implies 'straight forward looking.' The Dalai Lama is one of his incarnations, and therefore you will find the image not only in Lamayuru, but in many other temples besides. Avalokita is an Indian name, and I suppose this particular Bodhisattva has been worshipped in India long before Buddhism came to Tibet, and he might likewise have emigrated to Japan as you suggest. I am sure he has some female side here too, and I believe I have seen somewhere a horse's head amongst the eleven heads."

In Japan the Bodhisattva Kwannon seemed to be especially connected with the *Swastika* and I had hoped this might help in the identification of Chan-ras-zik with Kwannon. My friend the priest Shioiri of the Hozin-in temple at Asakusa (Tokyo) did not

believe that there was any connection between Kwannon and the Swastica, but I certainly noticed that the sign was placed profusely on the roofs, images and ornaments of many temples in Japan dedicated to this Bodhisat. Mr. Peter of Leh wrote to me in this connection that he did "not think that Chan-ras-zik is connected with the *Swastica*. The *Swastica* is very common in Ladakh. Some heretical sects used the *Swastica* turned to the left instead of the correct right winding *Swastica*. These people also turn their prayer mills the wrong way, and they are even said to go round the mane walls the wrong way, though I have never seen anything so heretical myself."

There were many *chortens* amongst the *Gompa* buildings, at Lamayuru and around these a walk had been arranged lined with dozens of prayer-wheels, which, as we passed along, the Lamas set spinning. I noticed here, as in the Himis *lamaserai*, that numbers of little boys of about seven or eight years old were entered as novices, and looked very delightful in their little priestly robes. Apparently, as in Burma, it is the custom for every boy to enter the Order for a period of religious education. The usual monastery dogs, fierce beasts who are never let off their chains, commanded the door at the *Gompa*, and had to be held down in order to let me pass.

The and good Lama were delighted with the little presents of mirrors and cloth brought them, but were as unwilling as their brothers in Mulbek to part with any of their curiosities. Nor is this really surprising; for when one comes to think of it, these so called

'curios' are the vessels of their worship, and sometimes even objects of adoration; so that to ask them to sell them is to my mind distinctly bad form. As a matter of fact, these treasures are often sold by the women, who are not so scrupulous.

My departure from Lamayuru was full of difficulties. The joint Commissioner, being now one stage ahead, had commandeered every pony in the place; and my own pony men, who were Drassis, not Ladakhis, seeing that I should be obliged to take them on another stage, ran away in the night, leaving a miserable little boy in charge of the animals. Two other travellers bound for Yarkund were in the same plight as myself, and the *Gopa* (headman, being unable to cope with the situation thought fit to disappear also. Where needs must, the devil drives, and in the morning I raided Lamayuru, and was rewarded with the capture of three coolies, one of whom turned out to be one of my own runaways. One man made good his escape a little later, and so, short handed as I was, I pressed on, with all the servants acting as drivers until Khalatsi was reached. There, an obliging *tahsildar*, supplied me with a fresh transport train. The travellers to Yarkund were less lucky, and were delayed a whole day, until the misguided *Gopa* was indiscreet enough to return.

The road from Lamayuru to Khalsi, or Khalatsi, in the Indus Valley, ran down a defile, the sides of which rose naked and precipitous for many thousand feet above a roaring torrent. The scenery was most imposing, but as we continued to descend, the heat became

oppressive, and once we had entered the broad valley of the Indus, the glare was almost unbearable. The valley was sandy, and sudden violent gusts of wind sent dust and shingle flying before it. Khalatsi village, which contains many noble trees, and which was surrounded with acres of flourishing crops, was the only oasis in this desert valley.

Khalatsi is 10,000 feet above sea level, and this was the lowest altitude I reached for several weeks in spite of the blazing heat, the rarity of the air was noticeable. I never got quite accustomed to it, and in the uplands of the Pang Kong lakes, where we remained for a long while at over 14,000 feet, I suffered so severely from sun burns that I could not bear the daily wind to blow upon my face, but had to put on a silk mask. While the sun's rays scorched, the temperature in shade seemed freezing, so that between the two I was never comfortable. In the high valley of Rupshu this is even more remarkable, and no amount of adjusting of garments will give more than a few minutes respite. The sun's rays pass easily through this fine atmosphere, and sun-burns are common even amongst the natives. The lips crack, the hands chap, and the nose—which unfortunate protrusion always catches the sun—takes a bacchanalian hue, after first parting with several coats of skin. There is very often a difference of sixty degrees between the sun and the shade temperature in Leh. The rainfall is only about three inches in the year.

At Khalatsi we crossed the Indus by a fine wooden bridge and turned up along the right bank till we

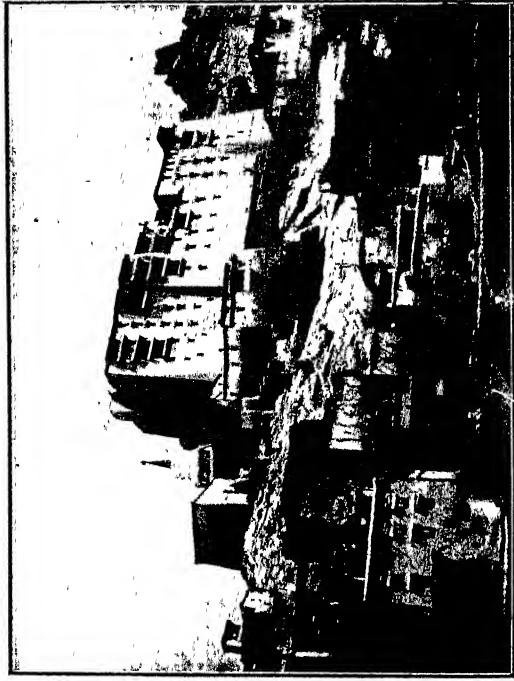
came to the village, which is, as I have said, a large place, embedded in trees, and surrounded with luxuriant crops—all the result of a fertilizing spring in the wilderness. It is wonderful what water will do in this country. Finding that the same conditions of famine were produced even here by the presence of the Joint Commissioner, I decided to get ahead of him to Nurla, and he very obligingly cut his next day's march short, so as to let me get well ahead of him. Travelers in so desolate a country as this are a great tax on the resources of the people. Though Khalatsi is a perfect garden, I saw no green or living thing between it and Nurla. The mountains reminded me much of those of Chitral. Their flanks were composed of slopes of loose shale, and much debris of broken rock lay about their bases. Ever since entering Ladakh proper *mane* walls had been increasing in length and height, and the *chortens* in elaborate designs. Both monuments were plentiful at Nurla. Besides the '*om mane padmi*' inscriptions on the *mane* walls, I noticed many beautifully carved stones bearing figures of Buddhas and of Bodhisattvas,* and wheels and other designs. Unluckily the more handsome stones were too massive and heavy to carry away.

On the following day (the 11th of June,) we marched 15 miles to the next oasis at Saspul. No cultivation broke the monotony of the desert valley anywhere. On the 12th we left the immediate bank of the Indus for a while, and climbed up on to a desolate plateau

* A Bodhisattva is a saint who is ready to attain the enlightenment of Buddha-hood.

divided from the river by low ranges of hills. Not a blade of grass was to be seen. We descended to Bazgo a large village clustering at the foot of a cliff, on the summit of which was built rather a fine *gompa*, or *lamaserai*. The situation of this monastery on the cliff was like that of Lamayuru, but the building was less imposing. Some of the *chortens* in the vicinity were thirty feet high; but the inscriptions on the *mane* wall seemed less skilfully carved. After seeing the solidity of ancient Buddhist remains in India, I was at first rather struck with the apparent instability and uselessness of the monuments of Ladakh; but after more careful observation, I recognised that, owing to the very small rainfall of this country the monuments were by no means as perishable as I supposed. For instance, I noticed outside Leh two large *chortens* standing at either end a gigantic prayer wall over a mile in length. Though these *chortens* are only made of clay, they remain still exactly as they were when Moorcraft sketched them nearly eighty years ago. Again, I found in certain tombs, clay prints, composed of the ashes of lamas mixed with clay, in perfect preservation, though they had lain exposed to the elements for many years. The only real agent of erosion and destruction in this rainless country is wind blown sand.

We marched 13 miles to Leh on the 13th of June, having camped in a ravine at Tharu the night before. It was a trying walk over fine granite dust. There is a large *lamaserai* near the Indus, perched up upon a rock at a place called Pitak. From here Leh is five



THE PALACE OF THE *GIALPO* AT LEH

miles away across the gently rising desert ; but distances are most deceptive in Ladakh, and Leh looked closer than it really was. As we approached the city, the religious monuments increased in size and number. *Chortens* covered acres of ground. Some were as much as forty feet high, and rose from bases twenty-five to thirty feet square. They formed a foreground to the view of the city. Behind them rose the houses of Leh, intermixed with poplar groves. Above all, on a high ridge dominating the town, stood the palace of the *Gialpo*, or ex-Raja of Ladakh. This building looked not unlike the Potala at Lhassa, and was finely proportioned. It was nine storeys high, and its in-leaning walls gave it the appearance of great solidity ; but as a matter of fact the whole place is in sad disrepair, and is falling into decay. The *Gialpo* subsists on a *jagir*, allowed him by the Maharaja of Kashmir, and is now a person of no consequence, politically or socially. Passing through the thronged streets of Leh, we made our way to the camping ground, which is situated in the largest grove of poplars in Ladakh. The place is considered so well wooded by the Ladakhis, that they quote it in their songs. There is quite a good rest-house in Leh, and the Joint Commissioner has a charming bungalow and garden near by. I was most hospitably entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Peters of the Moravian Mission. A gloom had lately been cast over the small European community by the death of Dr. Shaw of the Mission, who was a great authority on Ladakh. His widow was still in Leh.

Leh is the capital of Ladakh, and is a city of considerable importance, and a great centre of trade. It is the market in which traders from Russian Asia, Yarkund, and Kashgar, who have crossed the lofty passes of the Karakorum, exchange their goods with the merchants of Kashmir and India. The caravans from the north begin to pour over the Khaṛ Dong early in September. They remain in Leh all the winter, and return north again in the following spring as soon as the passes are open. Yarkund is thirty marches from Leh.

There was never a more cosmopolitan city than Leh. Its bazaars are filled with travellers from Yarkund, Kashgar, Andijain, Bokhara, and Tashkent from the north, and with traders from Gilgit, Hunza, Baltistan, Kashmir and India from the south. The picturesque confusion of its streets is a sight never to be forgotten. On occasions the main bazaar is cleared and used as a polo ground. I was very interested to notice the reverence with which the people treated a certain priest, called Bakula Lama who was the chief, or abbot, of two or three big *gompas* in Leh. The men took off their caps and knelt to him, and the women curtsied as he passed, just as Roman Catholic peasants do on the Continent. In moving along, this kindly faced lama touched the heads of the people with his hand and blessed them.

I visited Zanka Gomba, of which I believe Bakula Lama is the head. Zanka Gomba is quite near Leh, and is supposed to be very wealthy. It is a fine building, and unlike most others of its class is situated

on flat open country, instead of upon some dizzy crag or cliff. It contained some very fine wall paintings; but the figures depicted were exceedingly complicated, and most of them represented terrific monsters in various rampant attitudes. On one wall I noticed a 'wheel of life' standing in Paradise, but upheld by a black demon. Within the wheel were many pictures which at first looked gross, but which were intended to convey the pure and excellent teachings of Buddhism. For example the black demon holding the wheel, which might be imagined to be some frightful divinity of devil worship, really represented the demon of lust, desire, sense and hate, which alone holds humanity to the wheel of death and rebirth, and therefore to suffering. It is this demon of 'lust for life' which stands between man and the attainment of Buddhahood and blessed *nirvana*. The figures round the edge of the wheel represented ignorance, consciousness, sense, contact, pain, pleasure, desire, indulgence, birth and death, the weakness to which humanity is heir, by reason of its own evil *karma* (action). Within the spokes of the wheel are shown the six undesirable states into which beings may be reborn, according to the excellence or otherwise of their deeds—The Infernal World, the Spirit World, the Animal World, the Human World, the Demi-God World, and the Heaven World. Even Heaven is considered undesirable, for the gods themselves are mortal, and subject to sorrow, decay, change and death. Only Nirvan—the blissful absorption—can offer that perfect peace of mind which passes all understanding.

And in the hub and centre of the wheel are a cock, a pig and a snake, representing lust, sloth and hate which are the centre and root of all suffering.

Brethren! there are four noble truths, which the Lord Buddha taught—the truth of suffering, the truth about the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path which leads to suffering's end. Read the excellent Law of the Wheel which the Lord Buddha turned. It possesses noble truths and comforts which still shine brightly before the world, through twenty-four centuries of corruption and priest-craft.

What struck me most forcibly about the lamaism of Ladakh was its lack of simplicity. The beautiful old Buddha stories—the Dipankara Jataka, the dream of Maya, the Birth of Buddha, the Renunciation, the Great Enlightenment, are episodes which find no place in the pictures of Ladakh. Here heresy and the imagination of man have run riot. The grotesque and the obscene have been introduced and have obscured the pure and simple teaching of the Wheel though, as I have shown, the moral teaching intended is still good. Previous to the introduction of Buddhism into Ladakh, there existed a worship of devils and demons; and these survive and still play a large part in the religion of the country. There is no doubt that the lamas, like priests of other faiths, have revived all that was terrifying, in order to maintain their influence over a superstitious people. In Ladakh nothing can be done without the lamas. Even after death the spirits of the departed rely for protection on the prayers and

liturgies of their priests on earth. No wonder then, that Western Tibet is the most priest-ridden country in the world.

Zanka Gompa was filled to overflowing with beautiful brass images, lamps, gongs, bells, trumpets, silken banners and hangings. One wing was used as a library, each manuscript being bound between slips of wood, and kept in a pigeon-hole in the wall, as at Lamayuru.

On the hill near the palace of the *Gialpo* there was a fine image of the Bodhisattva Matreiya some thirty feet in height, which occupied a delapidated red painted *lamaserai*. The figure, which was seated, was hewn out of the living rock. It was best viewed from the second storey of the building. through a little window on a level with the face. The image was well painted, and several large turquoise adorned its forehead. Matreiya is the Buddha of the future, who will come to instruct humanity afresh, five thousand years after the Gautama Buddha entered into Nirvana, that is to say in about two thousand five hundred years from now.

The women in Leh are far superior in looks and dress to their sisters in the country. They wear an enveloping robe, usually of dark cloth, and round the waist is often hung a charm. A goat's skin, with the forelegs sewn together, is their over the back. But what distinguishes them is their head dress. The natural hair is arranged in plaits like a Kashmiri girl's, but on either side of the head are attached large tufts of false hair. On the top of the head, and hanging down to the shoulders, is a leather pad, studded all

over with turquoise. This peculiar hat is called a *peyrak*. A Ladakhi lady invests the whole of her fortune in turquoise, and occasionally one sees a *peyrak* of no small value. Most often, however, the stones are of a poor green colour, and full of black flaws. No one could accuse the Ladakhi maids of prettiness. They are open and frank—not to say bold—in manner, and are indeed much less shy than the men. The peculiar custom by which they contract temporary marriages with traders, has already been referred to. These marriages usually extend over a period of six months, or until the snow is off the passes, and it is time for the temporary husbands to return to their homes in India or in Central Asia.

A Mystery Play is held every spring at the *lamaserai* of Himis. It is the most important religious festival of the year, and is largely attended, not only by the inhabitants of Leh, and all the *lamas* from the neighbouring *gompas*, but also by yellow robed priests from distant Lhasa. I was therefore not able to stay more than a few days in Leh, and was obliged to set out for Himis on the 17th of June. The distance is 22 miles. The journey can be made in one day, but I preferred to take two over it, since the whole march is across dreary deserts of sand and shingle. I, therefore, spent a night at Goolab Bagh, which is situated on the left bank of the Indus exactly opposite the large and important *lamaserai* of Tiksey. The valley of the Indus is here about ten miles broad, the deserts sloping gently up to the foot of the hills from the strips of cultivation which fringe the river. Above

these lower ranges of hills rise snowy mountains, whose height must be between twenty and twenty-three thousand feet.

From the village of Changa the path strikes up to Himis *gompa*, now only two miles distant. The monastery is situated in a secluded and narrow ravine, towards the mouth of which converge a number of lengthy *mane* walls. The bed of the *nullah* is blocked up with *chortens* and other Buddhist monuments, and through these the path picks its way until at last the *gompa* comes in sight. Himis monastery, the Westminster Abbey of Western Tibet, is a large white stone building, covering several acres of ground. Unlike most other religious buildings of its kind, it is not situated on some inaccessible crag, but lies at the base of a precipitous mountain, which rises naked and barren for four or five thousand feet above the monastery. From the main court-yard, the *gompa* is three storeys high; but since the *lamasery* is built on a steep slope, there are several lower storeys in front, which give the place the appearance of greater height. The usual dark red band runs round the upper portion of the building in the form of a deep frieze. Spacious windows and galleries supply an air of consequence and dignity to the noble pile. Many of the balconies are protected from the sun by heavy dark draperies made of yak hair. From the roof rise one or two gilt pinnacles, and also a large number of poles surmounted with metal spikes and bunches of yak's hair. Lofty poles, stand in the lower court-yards, draped with fluttering prayer flags,

and bearing also tufts of yak's tails.

Having pitched my camp on the far bank of the *nullah*, I went and called on the head Lama. While my arrival was being announced I remained for a few minutes in a small court-yard, in which a prayer wheel was being driven by a jet of water. This was the first water prayer wheel I had seen. In revolving it rang a small bell. Presently I was taken up some steep flights of stairs, and conducted into the private apartments of the head Lama. The rooms appeared comfortably furnished. The head Lama was a decrepit but pleasant old gentleman. He talked about Lhasa; and I admired his two grossly over-fed little dogs, which both came from there. I expressed a wish to see the *gompa*. He complied by supplying me with a guide, and shortly afterwards I left him. On the top storey there were four or five chambers containing scores of images and hangings; and on the ground floor were two larger and more important shrines. One of these was the chief temple, and in the other was an enormous silver *chorten* with a gold '*hti*,' or crown. This *chorten* was studded with large red and green stones, which were probably valuable rubies and emeralds. Everything was on a luxurious and costly scale. Himis *gompa*, thanks to its secluded situation, has never been looted, and is now quite the most wealthy and important monastery in Ladakh. Within the building are two large court-yards, from which rise the tall masts already mentioned. In one of these yards are kept Tibetan mastiffs—great fierce brutes whose voices are husky with conti-

nual barking. They are fortunately tied up with strong chains. At night, when the *gompa* gates are closed, they are let loose. They are the most savage beasts imaginable, and are fully capable of guarding the treasures of Himis. The other courtyard is the largest, and in this is acted the Mystery Play. On all two sides of the court run roofed balconies, a part of which are kept for visitors and guests. The *gompa* buildings, with their picturesque galleries and draped balconies make a handsome and suitable setting for the play. A broad flight of stone-steps, forming the chief entrance and exit for the actors, leads up to the main temple doors; and in one corner stands an enormous prayer wheel five feet high, decorated with gold letters on a red ground. Such is Himis monastery, the luxurious home of the Lamas, in those remote wild mountains. Its height above the sea level must be about 12,000 feet.

In the evening I was treated to a little orchestral entertainment. The monastic music of Tibet is not unpleasant, on the whole. The pipes have a tuneful treble sound; and the melody, although it quavers mostly in semi and quarter tones, has a marked rhythm. The big brass cymbals have a particularly sweet ring and assist greatly in accentuating the time, as also do the drums. These drums are shaped like a warming pan. They are shallow, and are attached to a three foot pole. They are beaten with a stick, curved like a shepherd's crook. The most important instruments, however, are the great nine foot

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bronze trumpets. Sometimes the performers on these 'lamaphones' indulge in a one note hum, which vibrates pleasantly through the glen. More often, however, and always when excitement reaches a climax, they join together with other instruments in a general frenzy, belching forth discordant roars and grunts, anything but musical in sound. The noise is quite overwhelming. A sudden burst of such barbaric music disturbed my slumbers at about 2-30 a.m. I believe the Lamas were celebrating a midnight service.

On the following morning I was invited to another service. By the time I arrived, the Lamas had already taken their places in the chief hall of the temple. They sat cross legged on cushions, in long rows. The head Lama was at the altar, chanting in a quavering voice. In a back row were all the baby Lamas, some of them not ten years old, who looked really fascinating in their little red robes, and who behaved as badly as boys of that age always do, during a long and tedious ceremony. It seems to be the custom here for boys to receive religious instruction in the *gompas*, and to assume during that period the robes of a novice. The same system is found in Burma, where every Buddhist lad must become a novice or *ko yen* for a period varying from a few weeks to several years, to learn his religious duties. Each Lama had his books before him, and the whole congregation joined in, now and then, in the responses. At the same time the drums and cymbals beat gently, giving a rhythm and swing to the chant. Presently a bell rang and all the musicians

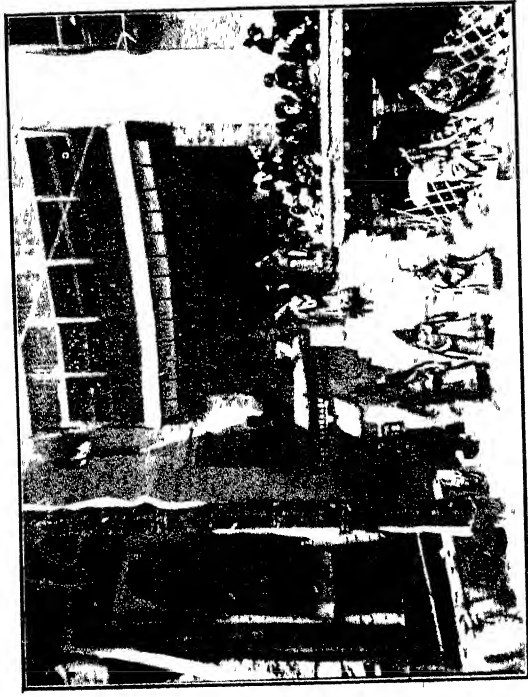
began to blow on conch shells and trumpets, and to beat drums and cymbals until the bell again sounded. Then, after a space, the next item of the rite was commenced. It was easy to see that the service was being conducted on well studied lines, and that everything was quite as regular as in our own church. At stated times, the Lamas placed hats on their shaven heads, shaped exactly like Bishop's mitres. These red mitres were handsomely embroidered. Afterwards, holy water was brought round in a bowl, and a little given to each member of the congregation, who after a low chant had been sung, drank it. About sixty Lamas took part in this service, which lasted an hour and a half. A curious feature of it was that they nearly all had some sort of musical instrument. The similarity between this Buddhist service, and that of the Church of Rome was striking. The use of holy water, and of the Bishop's mitres, the intonation of the chanting, and the method of raising sacred dishes before the altar, were only a few points of parallelism. I believe that it has long been agreed that the two creeds show traces of ancient rites which in former times they must have shared in common. No doubt too the Nestorians wandering in Central Asia adopted, and afterwards introduced into Europe, the customs of the Buddhists they had met. The most casual observer would notice that the similarity was too remarkable to be due wholly to coincidence.

Like all the most important *gompas*, Himis possesses a *skeoshok*. A *skeoshok* is a man who, in some former existence, has attained the right of admit-

tance into Nirvana, but who instead of entering paradise has preferred to be re-incarnated in human form, in order to benefit his fellow men.* On the death of a *skeoshok* his identity is at once searched for in the body of an infant, born at that same time; and after the babe has proved that he is really the expected incarnation, he is installed in his own *gompa*, at about the age of four, as its spiritual head. The *skeoshok* of Himis was, according to Knight, re-born in Lhasa for a long time and has only lately returned to his own *gompa*. The present *shooshok* was at the time of my visit engaged in a long meditation, and had retired for a period of 12 years. He had already completed eleven. I was told that during all that time he had not uttered a single word. Buddhism insists strongly upon the importance of meditation, by which a man becomes "set free from passion, pride and wrong views, and by that does he cross the ocean of *samsara*, stem the torrent of craving, and destroy within himself all evil" Elsewhere in the 'question of *milinda*', the Buddha himself is made to say to Rahula—"Practise thyself, Rahula, in that meditation which acts like fire. Thereby shall no wrong dispositions, which have not yet arisen, arise within thee: nor shall they that have arisen bear sway over thy heart."

This lonely man's retreat was situated in a desolate valley about one hours climb above Himis. He had a comfortable little house up there, and one or two attendants, but he would see no one else, and had

* This definition would also describe a Bodhisattva equally well.



THE MYSTERY PLAY AT HIMIS

The monastery buildings made a handsome and suitable setting for the play.

spent the last eleven years in constant meditation, and deprived of all those joys, which we should consider make life worth living. Though meditation is strongly advocated by Buddhism, yet at the same time severe asceticism is condemned. On the way up to this lonely retreat I came upon a herd of oorial. Himis valley is a sanctuary for all life, and these animals knew it, and were wonderfully tame.

The Mystery Play commenced at about 9 o'clock on the morning of the 20th of June; the supposed birthday of Padma Sambava, who introduced Buddhism into Tibet. The main courtyard, which was the scene of the play, was handsomely decorated with draperies and with immense embroidered silk hangings. These represented Buddha in the *dhyana*, or attitude of meditation, and the pictures were beautifully worked on a ground of yellow or white silk. These banners, which covered the whole expanse of wall, were hung from balconies. Some of them were thirty feet in length. Many of the Lamas and spectators bowed to these figures during the intervals between the acting. The whole place was packed with men and women who were kept off the stage by a wooden railing. All the windows and balconies were crowded with people. The Gialpo and his family had a balcony to themselves. The guests had chairs in a verandah, beneath which a large orchestra, with all the usual instruments, was seated. Two masked figures appeared, who acted the part of comic policemen and cleared the stage.

At the sound of a bell the band began to play,

and a troop of figures, arrayed in most gorgeously embroidered Chinese robes, and wearing tall Chinese hats, entered by the stone stair-case leading from the Chief Temple. They executed a slow and stately dance, symbolic of something. No one could explain the meaning of this, or the following dances. But I believe this troop represented the pre-Buddhist priests of the ancient Bon, or, devil worship. All Lama's dances are very slow and lengthy, and are apt to become tedious. After them, came another party with brass masks, holding the bell, the *dorji* (thunder bolt), and a two stringed rattle called, the *daru*. Their performance was as slow as the last, and their raiment equally costly. The pauses between the acts were terribly long; but presently a tremendous crash of music heralded the entry of nine masked gods, accompanied by 60 or 70 Lamas. A perfect maze of colour swept through the court before our eyes. Gorgeously silks swirled about the dancers. The music grew louder. The roar of a hundred rattles shook the ground. One sometimes closed ones eyes to treasure up for future use some phase of the drama. Some of the gods had benign faces; the masks of others were terrifying. Some were jovial, and others were bored. The head Lama himself could not explain at all satisfactorily, through a translator, what the scene was supposed to represent, but apparently the central figure under the silk umbrella was the founder of the Monastery. After much processing, and dancing under their silken umbrella of Royalty, the gods took their seats in a row. Their Lamas seated themselves oppo-

site them ; and then a couple of comic beggars tried to approach the deities, but were constantly driven away by a figure with a huge grinning mask, whose duty it was to protect the gods and to fan them with a peacock fan. I think this mummery was intended to show the impossibility of reaching the gods except through the medium of the Lamas—cunning Lamas ! Afterwards each god executed a *pas seul* which lasted at least one and a half hours.

And so the play continued slowly and pompously, but never ceasing for two whole days, until the senses began to reel beneath the fatigue of it. Comedy followed tragedy, gods followed devils, dancers followed chanters, and never once, so far as I could tell, was the same robe, or the same mask used a second time. In one passage only could I clearly follow the meaning. A Lama entered with a sacred triangle. Upon this was placed a paste corpse. A procession of Lamas blessed the body and threw holy water to the spirit. The spirit left the body and wandered in the darkness which intervenes between death and re-birth or an entrance into Nirvana. Now hideous and shrieking fiends beset the spirit. For a time the Lama's charm prevailed. Then it grew weaker, and the devils rushed in and advanced closer and closer, stabbing at the body, until eventually they began to devour it. Skeletons and red Tiger devils rushed in and danced, till chased away by the Lamas. Strong charms were used, and *through the power of its Lamas*, the spirit was at last free from its enemies, until it found relief in absorption, into Nir-

vana, or in a re-birth. How different these terrors all are from the Master's real sweet promise of peace.

"Never shall yearnings torture him nor sins
 "Stain him, nor aches of earthly joys and woes
 "Invade his safe eternal peace; nor deaths
 "And lives recur. He goes
 "Unto Nirvana He is one with life,
 "Yet lives not He is blest, ceasing to be.
 "Om, *man padme om*! the dewdrop slips
 "Into the shining sea!"

The religion of this realm of gods and devils follows only the merest outlines of the pure and admirable doctrines of the great teacher of Buddhism. There is no doubt but that Tibet embraced the Buddhist faith long after most of the neighbouring countries had already done so. Indeed, Buddhism was not introduced into Central Tibet until about 400 A.D., and the Bon Chos did not finally disappear until the fourteenth century. Before its introduction even, Buddhism had already lost the purity of the teachings of Sakya Muni. The presence of things which are dreadful and things which are obscene are found only in the Lamaism of Central Asia. The early Buddhism of China was quite free from it, and the so-called modern Buddhism of the Chinese has really ceased to be Buddhism at all. In all the hundreds of carvings found in Gandhara not one single instance of obscenity can be mentioned. Lamaism in Western Tibet has imbibed much of the Bon religion which preceded it, and all that it has imbibed is bad. Traces of the Bon Chos are to be seen in the peculiar admixture of demon and god worship.

The red tiger devil is one of the evil spirits of Bon; and no doubt we witness in some of the acts of the Mystery Play, traces of former cannibalism—or at any rate of human sacrifice.

The large majority of Lamas in Ladakh belong to the red order. There are a few yellow Lamas, whose cult was introduced into Tibet in the fourteenth century by the reformer Tsangkapa. Yellow was the original colour of early Buddhism. It was used by the Buddha himself, and was for that reason adopted to Tsangkapa. There is a *Lamaseraï* of yellow Lamas at Kirdzong near Khalsi.

There is nothing about the Tibetan Lama resembling the modesty and piety of the priests of Ceylon, or the gentle *phoongys* of Burma. In Burma the *bikhu* or priest, has few duties to perform in the way of instructing the laity, except when the education of boys is placed in his hands. He assumes the yellow robes in order to *really* renounce the world's vanities, and thus more quickly approach Nirvana. He is dependent on the laity for his daily bread, which he humbly seeks every morning from house to house in absolute silence, without asking or returning thanks. The Tibetan lama on the other hand is a member of the most wealthy community in the country. Directly or indirectly, the *Lamaseraï* owns most of the land in the vicinity. The charity of the people is demanded by the priests almost as a right. The Lama will ride a horse, and deny himself none of those pleasures or luxuries which in taking the robe, he might be supposed to have renounced. On the

contrary, life within the *gompa* is probably a good deal more comfortable and easy than in the mean squalid villages which lie in the valley below. The lama of Tibet compares as unfavourably with the good and gentle *phoongy*, as the distorted religion of Tibet and China does with the pure Buddhism of the *Mahayana* or 'Little Vehicle' of Ceylon and Burma.

Modern Buddhism is sometimes classified as 'northern' and 'southern.' The northern, or that of Tibet, China and Japan is known as the *Mahayana*, the Great Vehicle, and was written in Sanskrit. The southern, that which now retains much of its ancient purity, is found only in Ceylon, Siam and Burma. It is known as *Himayana*, or Lesser Vehicle, and has been handed down to us in the Pali script, a language which has now many European students, whose object it is to revive the beautiful teachings of the *Buddha*, for the use of the people of the west. The *Himayana* professes to be the purest teaching of Gautama Buddha. No doubt its claim is justified, and it does in fact follow closely the preaching of the Buddha and the rules of the councils of Rajagrihya and Pataliputra.

The Buddhism of the North absorbed so much impurity from other religions, that it has become almost unrecognizable. The doctrine of live and let live is so strongly a feature of the faith, that Buddhism is always more ready to absorb strange gods, than to destroy them. Indeed, Buddha expressly declined to deny the existence of gods. Possibly they existed, but what he did deny was, that they could help or

save humanity from the "Truth of Suffering," or that they were themselves immortal or all powerful. Man only could save *himself*, and by his good or evil '*karma*' (actions) would approach or retreat from the blessed Nirvana in future lives, most surely reaping just what he had sown. The Bodhisattva, the being who has attained so high as to be about to reach Buddha-hood, is a feature of the north, but is not recognised at all in the south. The Buddhism of the north owes its form to the fourth Buddhist Council held by Kanishka, King of Peshawar and Kashmir, in about 100 B.C.* Bodhisattvas were known in Gandhara, though only two, namely Maitreya and Avalokitesvara, are found in the Greco-Buddhist statuary of ancient Gandhara. But these same Bodhisattvas are found to-day all over Tibet, and even in Japan, amongst the ever increasing ranks of *Bosatsu* (Sanskrit Bodhisattva). Avalokitesvara is known in Japan as Kwannon, the god or goddess of mercy. There is a difference of opinion there about the sex. Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, is known in Japan under the name of Mikoku. It is interesting too to find Kubera and Hariti in distant Japan. They were respectively the god of the north, and the female fury whom Buddha converted into the goddess of children and plenty. Kubera and Hariti are conspicuous in the ancient Gandhara

* Kanishka's date has not yet been accurately settled, though much else is known about him. He probably lived between 200 B. C. and 200 A. D. He buried relics of the Buddha in Peshawar, which were recovered in 1908, and have since been given to the Burmese, who have enshrined them at Mandalay.

statuary. Their Japanese names are Temon and Kishi Bojin.

But to return to Himis. The Mystery Play lasted two whole days, and we left Himis late on the afternoon of the 21st of June, and marched seven or eight miles to Chimray, crossing the Indus by rather a rickety old bridge. The sky became overcast, and a heavy shower of rain fell. It luckily only lasted an hour or so. At Chimray there was a fine *gompa*, but I did not go up to it.

We were now heading almost due east, with the Pang Kong lakes as our objective. On the 22nd of June we climbed three thousand feet to Zingral, at the foot of the Chang La. Zingral, where we camped for the night, is 16,400 feet, and I felt the rarity of the atmosphere not only during the day's climb, but also at night when I lay back in bed. Some of the servants complained of headaches and dizziness at first, but the sensation wore off. There was only one small flat spot at Zingral and on that we pitched the tents. The place was exceedingly bleak and exposed, and sleet and snow fell in the afternoon. There was no sort of shelter for the coolies. They built a rough wall of stones to keep the wind off, and spent the night in the open in preference to the fly of my tent which I offered them. It says much for their hardiness that they survived, for even with rugs and coats I could hardly keep out the bitter cold. We brought milk and wood with us to last for three days.

It snowed hard all night, and next morning we woke to find the pass wrapped in a dense fog. Snow

was swirling silently down, and lay deep on the ground. However, the weather suddenly cleared at ten o'clock, and we were able to start. The ponies, whose grass had been buried under the snow, were driven in with long icicles hanging from them. Luckily some unladen coolies overtook us, and by engaging them we were able to make the loads very easy. But it was a stiff climb to the summit of the Chang La, and as we rose the atmosphere became altogether insufficient. I had to sit down and gasp after every few hundred yards. The pass, however, presented no other difficulties, and the snow beneath that which had fallen during the night was good and firm. We reached the top a little after noon, and enjoyed a glorious view over the Indus valley to the snows beyond, from our elevation of 18,400 feet above sea level. This was the highest altitude I reached on this journey. At the summit a number of packages lay scattered about, abandoned by some trader, who had either been overtaken by a storm, or whose ponies had become exhausted. Such property is, however, quite safe, it being a point of honour never to molest abandoned baggage. This law reminded me of the customs of the Waziris and other Pathan tribes, who, when they migrate for the summer to the hills, leave their property in the lowlands exposed in a *ziarat*, or shrine, where not even the thieving Mahsuds will touch it.

The descent was steep, and by this time the snow had become soft, so that we often sank in up to our knees. However, we suffered less distress in breathing

than during the ascent. Presently we left the snow and passed down a desolate stony valley, enclosed between enormous barren mountains. Night was coming on, and we were forced to halt where there happened to be a little grass for the ponies. There was, however, no fuel. We sought in vain for juniper or dung, and eventually were so hard put to it for fire wood, that my alpinestock and a basket were burnt, before any tea could be heated. Next morning I was suffering from sun burns, caused by the intense glare off the snow, and my face and hands were very inflamed. Two of the servants were down with fever, and the rest were too numbed with cold to do any work. However, we got started again at 7.45 a.m. and pursued our way down the valley to Durgo village, where milk and wood and two riding ponies for the sick were obtained. The green cultivation of Durgo was indeed welcome. After a rest we marched on to Tanktse, which has a comparatively comfortable altitude of only 13,200 feet. Here we halted for a day in a most charming grove of trees, to repair our damaged kit, and to clean ourselves up a bit. There were several large inscriptions on the rocks.

I found the daily wind more trying in the Tanktse valley than anywhere else in Ladakh. It got up at ten in the morning, blew grit and dust about all day, and subsided in the evening, leaving the sun burnt skin of my face and hands tingling with irritation. I found zinc ointment gave much relief.

On the 26th June we marched 16 miles to Muglib, taking fuel with us. *Yaks* were employed for the



ROCK INSCRIPTIONS—TANKTSE VALLEY

baggage, as there is practically no grazing beyond this point. The *yak*, while being able to subsist on the scantiest vegetation, carries quite as heavy a load as a pony. They are clever mountaineers, and are wonderful over snow. But they hated the heat of the Tanktse valley, and protested with loud grunts. I passed numbers of them grazing over the mountains. The *zho*, which is used for ploughing purposes everywhere in Ladakh, is a hybred between a cow and a *yak*.

There was no path at all, but we simply followed the course of the savage ravine. There was plenty of water as far as Muglib, but never a drop beyond, except in one large pool at Tsearh Tso, where quantities of duck and teal were breeding, the same duck which would come down to Kashmir in October, to be shot at Hajan and on the Woolar. All the way from Himis I saw hundreds of chicore near the path, which were so unaccustomed to being shot, that stones had to be thrown at them to make them rise. They made a welcome addition to the pot, as also did blue rock pigeon which collect in the fields at Leh.

The Pang Kong lakes were ten miles further on, an unpleasant walk over shingle and sand drift, under a fierce sun, and against a perfect gale of wind. I think Ladakh was at its very worst that day. However, the sight of the lake was to some extent a compensation. Pang Kong was a great inland sea, deep blue in colour, and slightly brackish in taste, which lay glittering before us in the sunlight as we emerged

from the ravine. We struck the lake at its northern extremity, and it stretched away southwards to the foot of imposing mountains which towered up to 22,000 feet; though, from this distance, they did not look so high. Pang Kong has an elevation of 13,000 feet. It is nowhere more than six miles broad, but its length is 40 miles. The opposite bank is Chinese territory, and at Rudokh and other places, Celestial garrisons commanded by mandarins are ready to stop travellers. But as a matter of fact my permit referred to Ladakh only, and I was specially forbidden to enter Greater Tibet.

At the extremity of the lake one path branches off down the Southern bank towards Tsomerari, and another leads to the upland plateau of Chang Chenmo, and the desolate Dispang. This was the old route to Yarkand, before the Khar Dong and Shyok Valley route was opened up; and this path was followed by the Forsyth Mission.

One day Pang Kong will be one of those terrible salt plains, or marshes, which are found so commonly in Central Asia. The lake is slowly shrinking, and the hills round about show the levels from which it has already subsided. Its waters have no exit, and a barrier blocks it up at this end. Not a tree or shrub or any green living thing is visible upon the surrounding hills. As we stood watching the lake, a party of Champas passed us, driving a large flock of sheep each of which carried a load of borax. The Changpas inhabit Rupshu and also this district of Tanktse, and have the distinction of living at a great-

er elevation than any other people on earth. It is the Changpas who are said to wash only twice in their lives. I fully sympathize with them, for I myself found a bath with the Tanktse wind blowing the tent walls about, a matter of extreme discomfort. The *Changpas derive their name from the words *chang* (north), and *pa* (people) ; North People.

We now retraced our steps to Durgu, which we reached on the 29th of June. It had been my intention to cross over into the Shyok valley in Nubra ; but the accounts we now received of the flooded state of the river were so unpromising, that I decided not to try. The *gopa*, or head man, of Durgu suggested our travelling by the Nobbok La and Diger passes back to Leh, and this is the route we eventually took, after careful consideration. The Nobbok La track is very little used. We had to carry two loads of wood with us. We marched over rough stony slopes all day, and crossed one or two formidable streams, and presently camped for the night on a small grassy plain. Next morning, the 30th June, we crossed the Nobbok La. The ascent was at first easy, but became steep as we approached the summit. The pass proved to be a low shale ridge, between two mountains. It divides the Tanktse and Nubra valleys. There was a good deal of snow on the north side, and as it was in a bad state, the descent was difficult, and the ponies constantly floundered in up to their bellies. On the very top a cornice of ice, standing ten feet high all along the crest, gave us some trouble, but we eventually found a way down it. The Nobbok

La is, I should say, about 16,000 feet high. We reached Tangyar village just before dusk, after a long descent over rocks. Chicore were abundant.

Tangyar village was built on, and in, and about a high cliff. A small red *gompa*, or lamaseraï, was perched on a pinnacle all by itself. The camping ground was in a very dirty state, and was moreover on such a steep slope that beds, tables and chairs could only be stood level by putting stones under them on one side. I had hoped to be able to get some more transport to replace my exhausted animals; and though *yaks* were promised me over night, there were none forthcoming in the morning; and after great delay, Sharbat Khan and the *gopa* between them got one *yak*, one donkey, one lame pony and a bullock. With this unpromising collection we set off down the valley towards the Shyok river. We passed through a thick jungle of thorn bushes, and occasionally saw a field or a tree, which altogether made a pleasing change to the desolate rocks we had travelled amongst for so many days. Presently we came upon the Diger path, and crossed the Nobbok stream to a little village called Lhabap. Near it stood a large copse of trees, and everywhere red roses were in bloom. This oasis is the second largest in Ladakh, and I shall always look back to it gratefully.

However, we were soon again climbing steadily up to the plateau on which stood the village of Diger (13,500 feet). Neither transport nor supplies were obtainable, though I believe the *gopa* did all in his power to help us. We therefore pushed on another



A HALT AT THE SUMMIT OF THE DIGER PASS (HEIGHT 17,800 FEET)

two thousand feet up the mountains towards the Diger Pass, and camped at 15,500 feet near a tiny hut, which gave the followers some shelter. Also there was plenty of grass. Late in the evening I spied some *yaks* away over the hills, and these joined my party before dark. As it afterwards turned out we never could have crossed the pass without the help of these beasts.

To our consternation it snowed hard all night, and the tents were half buried in drifts by the morning. Also, of course, all the grass was covered, and the poor animals had a miserable time. However, the clouds broke up early, and we started up the hill at 7 a.m. Almost from the start the snow proved rotten, and soon the *yaks* were floundering deeply in it. Loads were thrown, and the whole caravan was crawling in all directions, like flies in tangle-foot. I almost despaired of ever reaching the summit, which was now visible ahead. The Ladakhi *yak* drivers, however, behaved splendidly, and even carried the loads themselves up the last steep curtain of snow to the crest of the pass.

I spent nearly an hour on the narrow summit of the Diger, breakfasting at a height of 17,800 feet above sea level. The views were superb. The valley up which we had struggled lay white and clean below us. Far down in the Shyok valley lay Diger village, and beyond rose the mighty Karakoram, whose uplifted snowy domes glistened in the early morning sunshine—'shoulder and shelf, green slope and icy horn.' Nor was the aspect of the Indus valley, down

into which we were about to plunge, less wonderful. The clouds of last night's storm were rolling up about the lower spurs, like a foamy sea, from which rose lines of peaks, averaging about 23,000 feet. Above all was a blue Tibetan sky.

We adjusted the loads carefully. Gharry found a rat, but luckily could not catch it. It seemed to me wrong to kill the only living creature whose hard fate it was to live in these icy solitudes. Even marmots could not subsist on the Diger.

The descent was so steep, that each *yak* was lowered down by the tail for the first few yards. The poor beasts grunted and grumbled loudly. So we descended from the snow, down to the boulder strewn valleys, down, down to the first village of Sobu; and still down, and down to the sandy deserts of Leh. I should have been willing to halt anywhere; but the followers longed for the delights of Leh bazaar, and so we pushed on. We were all pretty tired. The last few miles along unbroken lines of prayer walls and great *chortens* seemed interminable. We did not get back to the poplar grove in Leh till after dark.



YAKS IN DIFFICULTY ON BAD SNOW DIGER PASS

LADAKH.

(TO A PONY ON THE LEH ROAD)

1. Along the road to Leh, I'm marching on my way
Up passes stony.
You suffer, strain and bleed ; your blisters none will heed,
Poor baggage pony !
2. Over the Zoji La, Fotu and Nimak La,
To Lamayuru,
We for a *nullah* race We must improve the pace ,
Rivals pursue you.
3. Deep is the rotten snow ; swift streams descend below ;
Roar avalanches
No grass, because it snows , icicles on his nose,
The pony stanch is
4. Land of the Lamas meek , monastic pile on peak ;
Prayer walls and *chortens*.
Yak's tails, and *Devis* blue ; devils of every hue,
Features distorting.
5. Land too of Buddhas calm, prayer wheel and potent charm,
Lamas repeating —.
" *Om mane padme, Om !* The jewelled lotus *Om !*
All things are fleeting "
6. Each day ten million times, revolved by streams and winds,
The prayer-wheel saith—:
" *Om mane padme, Om !* The lotus law of *Om !*
Rebirth and death "
7. Land too of *oorial*. Shrill is the *marmot's* call
On mountain passes
Thin air, and upland bleak, *nullah* and mountain peak,
Scanned through field glasses.
8. Leh is left far behind. The Chung La has been climbed
Splendid the view.
A pearly line of snows, neath which the Indus flows.
Sky cloudless, blue.
9. Pony ! you are released. Go, in Elysium feast
To you delight.
Your bones in Leh were shed, where you ran loose and fed
On aconite.
10. Now in your stead a *yak*, complaining, bears your pack
On to Pang Kong ;
Where bitter tempests blow, straight from the frozen snow
The whole day long.

CHAPTER IX.

BALTISTAN.

‘It was a land of apricots’

Leh again—The Indus valley—Skirbichan—Hanoo—A dead Balti
Chorbat La—Baltistan—Khapalu—Polo—A frail raft—Skardu—
The Deosai—Return to Kashmir.

I rested for about a week in Leh. Several Europeans passed through, and Leh was quite sociable. We gave each other dinners in turn, and exchanged news. Amongst others, I met Monsieur Andrief of the Russian Consulate in Bombay, who was travelling across the Karakoram to Yarkand, and had been entertained by my father Colonel Enriquez, in Srinagar. His long journey ended successfully after many adventures, which Monsieur Andrief described to me, from Kashgar and St. Petersburg. These travellers almost produced a famine in Leh, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting half a maund of *atta* for my servants, who for ten day had only had *grim* and *sutto atta* to eat. Grass at this time was actually more expensive than rice. This did not trouble me much, as I had no ponies of my own, but it was a serious question for Andrief's party, who owned a large caravan.

We left Leh on the 9th of July, and retraced our steps down the Indus valley to Khalatsi. From there a path continues down the Indus valley towards Skardu, and this route we now took.

For the most part the road lay along the face of shale mountains. The scenery was, if possible, more savage and imposing than ever. The Indus was confined to a narrow channel, from which the hills rose naked and precipitous. The mountains were streaked with bands of blue, ochre, mauve, red, black and white. Such rock colourings are common in Ladakh. The hills round Nîmu and Shergol on the Leh road, are similarly streaked. Every now and then, from this utter barrenness, we dipped into an oasis. The villages in this part of the Indus valley are exceedingly prosperous and at this season the crops were standing green and high. The houses were surrounded with willows, fruit trees, and walnuts. All this is due to some picturesque little torrent. Red wild roses were growing luxuriantly, and I noticed small columbines and scentless sweet peas. Then from all this vegetation we passed amongst the *chortens* and prayer walls, out on to the next wild stretch of shale rock. Skubichan was just such a village. We halted there for the night. There was a *gompa* on a protruding bluff, and another one was clinging to the face of a cliff. Across the Indus the rock buttresses showed very contorted strata; and the river itself, rebellious at the restraint imposed upon it, roared and foamed between its narrow walls. The women were working in the fields. They were very shy and very ugly. They became petrified with fright if spoken to. This was curious, as the Ladakhi women, as already mentioned, are usually quite self possessed.

Later on the hills were composed of white granite. The surface had become brown with the action of weather, and the Tibetans had in many places scratched a white '*Om mane padmi*' through the thin brown film. I noticed much olivine adhering to the rock. In this valley we killed the only snake we had seen while in Ladakh. He was a little dust coloured reptile.

Beyond this point, where the Hanoo stream joins the Indus, the latter river enters such a formidable series of defiles and gorges, that no road can follow along it. I believe the natives have hung ladders on wooden pegs, and thus cross from ledge to ledge; but of course such fly-walks are very trying. My road now turned abruptly up the Hanoo ravine—a craggy uninviting valley, shut in by stupendous mountains. Nevertheless, there were villages here and there and Hanoo—Gamo was the last of these. It is the highest human habitation on the Ladakh side of the Chorbat La. We stopped there a night and took in supplies, before again climbing to the upper world. The ascent beyond was an easy and gradual one of about 2,500 feet, up a rough and shelving valley. There was snow on both flanks, and *yaks* were grazing below it. Heaven knows what they found to eat, but they came in useful next day in helping me over the Chorbat La.

As usual I was unlucky in the weather, and it snowed hard all night. The cold was intense, and I slept very little. There was no sort of shelter for the animals or their drivers. These improvident people

never do anything more than build a wall to keep off the wind though they often have to sleep there. At the same time, as the Chorbat is an important pass between Ladakh and Baltistan, the Kashmir Durbar should certainly build huts on both sides, and thereby save many lives every year.

The morning was fortunately fine, and the *yaks* were again driven in jingling with icicles hanging from their hair. There was another camping ground a mile above the one I remained at, but it was not a very suitable place, there being no grass for the animals. However, had I camped there, I might have been able to save a life. A little ahead, and at the foot of the final ascent to the pass, I came upon a man lying buried beneath the snow. An upright T. shaped stick such as coolies rest their loads on, was all that marked the spot. I was riding my *yak* at the time, and my suspicions being aroused, I had the snow scraped away till we found the body of a Balti coolie. The nose, ears and other extremities were already black with frost bite, but the man still retained a spark of life. I afterwards heard that he had lain there twenty four hours, so that there was no hope of reviving him. Still we gave him brandy, prepared hot cocoa, and rubbed his limbs, till the last signs of life disappeared. I then had him hoisted astride of my riding *yak*, and with an escort of three Ladakhis, the corpse was sent down the valley to Hanoo. It was ghastly to watch the poor body lurch this way and that, with the head fallen forward on the chest. No doubt they threw him under a rock as soon as they got out of sight. The

snow was again swirling silently down, which added to the cheerlessness of the scene. In the meanwhile the baggage *yaks* had been moving on, and were just disappearing over the crest of the pass. So I hurried on after them up the last steep ascent of snow, and reached the top at about 9-30 a.m., by which time the sun had again come out. Looking back I took my farewell of Ladakh, with its barren uplands, its curious people and its ancient monuments. Beyond the Indus, rose magnificent domes of snow; and the sorry little cavalcade of the dead Balti was just disappearing from the valley we had come up.

And now we descended into Baltistan—the land of apricots. Looking north we saw a far distant mighty wall of mountains, one of the peaks of which, K. 2., is the second highest in the world. I cannot say if K. 2, itself was visible, since it is much shut in by its neighbours; but many of the mountains which rose up against us were over 25,000 feet. This chain divides Baltistan from Chinese Turkestan. Sir Francis Younghusband crossed it in his adventurous journey from '*Pekin to Pindi.*' More recently Neve and Slingsby have explored into the group.

My own elevation, at the summit of the Chorbati La was about 16,790 feet. At the bottom of the first descent there was a rough hut, from which crawled a wretched man, blind from the snow glare, and calling "Oh Sahib! for God's sake, for Isa's sake* help me." This man turned out to be a comrade of the dead coolie we had found earlier in the day, and we now heard

* Christ's sake.

the whole story of the disaster. These two Baltis had been earning money all the summer in Simla, and were returning to their home in Khapalu, which was now only three days distant. They tried to push on over the pass late in the afternoon, but became exhausted with the cold, and blinded with the glare. Many people had passed them, some being their own countrymen, and had not heeded their appeals for help. Finally some Baltis agreed to assist them across the pass in return for the whole of their summer earnings. One miserable man could not move, and was soon abandoned, where I found him dead twenty four hours later. The other was left blind and starving, with the loads of both in this hut. I had him and his loads carried down to Chorbat village, 18 miles distant. There I steamed his eyes, and he quickly recovered his sight. He never came to see me afterwards in Khapalu, but the Raja of that place thanked me for what I had done.

The descent of 7,200 feet to Chorbat was exhausting to a degree. My knees felt as if they would break, and as my *chupplies* (or sandals) were wet with the snow, my feet slipped out at the ends and got badly rubbed. I always wear Pathan *chupplies*, and find them excellent under any circumstances, other than snow. It was late in the afternoon before I reached Chorbat. The baggage did not get in till dusk, and I cast many an anxious glance up the valley before the *yaks* came lumbering into sight. The camping ground was a pleasant one. Walnuts, apricots and mulberries grew by the hundred all round Chorbat. Apricots

were especially abundant, but to my disappointment the fruit was not yet ripe. Dried apricots form the chief export of Baltistan. No one dreams of asking money for apricots. What man cannot eat, or dry for winter use, falls and rots on the ground, where the dogs devour the fruit, just as they do mulberries in Kashmir. The Chorbat La, like the Lowari of Chitral or the Zoji of Kashmir, is one of those natural barriers which divide people of very different types. The distinction of race, climate, customs, religion and social conditions on each side of the Chorbat is remarkable. On the Ladakh slopes, live a well-to-do, Buddhist, polyandrous, pigtailed people. On the Baltistan side you find a poverty stricken, Musselman, polygamous, tribe. The Baltis are blessed with immense families which they can neither feed nor clothe. A large portion of the population goes off every summer to Simla or elsewhere, to earn money by load carrying. The Baltis are a cheery pleasant race, but as poor as they can be. They shave their heads, leaving only enormous bunches of hair over each ear, hanging down like elf locks to their shoulders. As soon as my arrival was made known, dozens of men and children came up to the camp and sat round me in the most friendly way. They gave me milk, and made up a fire to dry my feet at. They all spoke Urdu fairly well, and had plenty to say for themselves. When at last the kit came in, they assisted in pitching the tent, admired the camp furniture, and made themselves useful and agreeable in a dozen ways. All this was very different to arriving in a Ladakhi village,

where, besides the *Gopa* (or Headman), and a few hangers-on, no one took much interest. In Chorbat I was shown the skin of a freak lamb, which had two complete bodies, but only one head. This monstrosity was, of course, born dead.

My road now lay down the valley of the Shyok, and along the left bank of that river. Many times it crossed the face of a precipice on a series of unsteady looking pegs, and sometimes it darted up the hill side for three or four hundred feet to avoid some cliff or landslide. On such occasions I obtained some grand views of Mt. Masherbrun (25,677 feet), which towered majestically up into the vault of Heaven. It really was a beautiful and imposing sight. This peak must be amongst the highest mountains in the world. Nunga Purbat, which is the fifth in the list, is less than a thousand feet higher than Masherbrun.

Khapalu is one of the largest and best wooded villages in Baltistan. Shortly after my arrival, the Raja sent me a *dali* (or present) of cherries and apricots, and hoped I would come and watch a game of polo in the evening. In return I sent Raja Nasri Ali Khan, and his uncle Sher Ali Khan presents of cloth. At sunset I went to the polo ground which proved to be a very good one for these parts. On one side was a pavilion, in which I took a seat. A tremendous noise of trumpets, *suranais* and drums heralded the advance of the Raja, and his uncle, and all the players, who carefully timed themselves to arrive *after* me. Nasir Ali Khan was a good-looking fellow of about 22 or 23 years of age. He was dressed in

spotless white, with a neat turban and long knee boots. He was, however, rather shy, and his uncle Sher Ali took the lead in conversation, and in every thing else. The whole family, including dozens of the Raja's cousins (Sher Ali's sons) were very distinguished looking, with fair complexions, and dark and neatly cut hair. Theirs is the best blood in Baltistan, and they are allied to the House of Skardu. Though now deposed by the Maharaja of Kashmir, Nasir Ali Khan still holds Khapalu as a *jagir*. The polo was very much the same as that played in Leh. The game was fast and reckless, and in this instance the players were much better mounted than usual. Nasir Ali took part in the game, and the remaining 15 players were mostly members of the royal family. The Raja played dashingly, and was by far the most skilful man on the field.

The following morning I called on the Raja. His palace is a fine old five-storied building, with a spacious covered verandah on the top floor, from which a beautiful view of Khapalu and the Shyok Valley was obtained. Here, in spite of the poor light, the party insisted in arranging a group to be photographed. Afterwards, a meal was given, which consisted of biscuits and very sweet cocoa, served from a large silver jug into little china cups. I asked Sher Ali Khan what was written in the Koran about Musselmans eating with unbelievers. He replied that the fact of eating was nowhere forbidden, provided that the food was cooked by a Musselman. I was rather amused to hear him make this remark while munch-

ing a Huntley & Palmer's biscuit. He believed, or pretended to believe, that the biscuits were actually made in the shops in Srinagar from which he had bought them. My call was returned directly, in fact so promptly, that the Rajas accompanied me back to my camp. I proposed to sit outside, where all the cousins could be accommodated with rugs, but Sher Ali (taking the lead as usual) preferred the tent, which he secretly wanted to inspect. He took his seat on the bed while the Raja and others had chairs, and the cousins sat in rows outside. A disturbance was caused by Gharry suddenly waking up under the bed and finding Sher Ali's legs beside him. Sher Ali remained cross-legged on the bed for the rest of his stay, although the dog was instantly flung outside. I offered tea, but Sher Ali preferred *blanc-mange*, which to my relief was instantly produced by the servants. I heard afterwards that my cook had been given a hint beforehand about Sher Ali's weakness for *blanc-mange*. I gave them Cross & Blackwell's jam with it, which they would only consent to eat, after I had assured them that it was bought at a Musselman's shop in Srinagar. In the meanwhile the cousins made free with cake, and with my now slender supply of cigarettes.

Below Khapalu the Shyok river had to be crossed on skin rafts, which are locally known as *zaks*. These consisted of about 20 large inflated goat skins loosely bound together, and supporting a framework of a dozen poles. Two journeys of each of the two *zaks* took across the whole of my kit, my ten coolies, three

servants, myself and the crew. The rafts were lifted out after each trip, and the skins blown up tight again. They leaked considerably, which caused a continual whistling and bubbling. These frail craft were very buoyant, and it was some satisfaction to feel that, even if they came to bits, each separate part would float. The crew consisted of two or three men armed only with poles, so that they had not the least control over their *zaks* once they were in deep and rough water. They relied entirely on their knowledge of the stream, and in the selection of the right starting point, from which the river would steer them of its own accord to the spot they desired to reach on the further bank. It struck me that these *zaks* were just what was wanted in the army. The regimental *mas-saks* of the Indian Army would make a good *zak*. Fifteen big skins would carry ten men with rifles. One hundred and fifty skins would carry a whole company. But enough for half a company would be quite sufficient for a regiment to keep up, and the whole lot could easily be carried on a few mules. Having landed my kit on the further bank, I myself proceeded by river to the next stage near Dowani. As I became more confident in the *zak*, I began to look forward to the rapids where we fled along, bobbing amongst the waves, and revolving helplessly round and round. The motion was quite exhilarating and Gharry was violently sick. We flew past bluffs and cliffs, villages and fields, and banks of sand trembling in mirage, until at last we landed at Dowani.

Near Keris the Indus is joined by the Shyok. The



KERIS, WHERE THE SHYOK RIVER JOINS THE INDUS
A LOADED ZAK

two rivers together form a broad and swift stream, much disturbed by rapids and whirlpools. At this point I crossed again on *zaks*. This time the journey was far more thrilling, not to say dangerous, and we were swept over a mile down stream before we were able to land. Now we had joined the Kargil-Skardu road, which in two long and fatiguing marches brought us to Skardu.

The Skardu Valley is about 30 miles long and five or six miles broad. A huge and imposing rock, like a small Gibraltar, rises from the centre of it. It is covered with the ruins of a fort. The Indus flows lazily past the rock through many channels. At its exit it enters again into a series of appalling gorges and defiles. Skardu village is situated on an alluvial plateau, at a height of 150 feet above the river, and 7,500 feet above sea level.

The climate is very hot in summer. Here again the Raja, Mohammed Shah, and myself exchanged calls; and again I witnessed a game of polo.

The Raja is middle aged, and not so spick and span as Nasir Ali of Khapalu. He, however, played a good game of polo, and was particularly skilful at throwing up the ball, and hitting it in the air after a goal had been scored.

North of Skardu lies Shigar, which is supposed to be the finest and best wooded valley in Baltistan. I had not time to visit it.*

* "The valley of the Shigar River leads up to the great mountain wall which is known as the Karakoram or Mustagh range, and which divides Chinese Turkestan from Kashmir territory. Along the crest of this mighty chain of mountains are some of the highest peaks in the world, Haramosh, Gwasherbrun, and Mount Godwin Austen (K2.) At the head of the Shigar valley is the magnificent Baltoro glacier towering above which there are four peaks over 26,000 feet high." *Beyond the Pir Panjal*. Neve.

We halted two days in Skardu, and set out for Kashmir on the 22nd of July. We started off with a 6,500 feet climb, and encamped for the night at Wazali Hadan (14,000 feet). It was a heart-breaking ascent, and the sun was hot. We were glad to reach the fire places and the dead pony which marked the camping ground. There was grass on the hill sides, and on the way up we passed a group of pencil-cedars.

Early next morning we crossed the Burji Pass (15,700 feet). There was practically no snow on it, and what there was was in excellent condition, as it was freezing hard. Three of our party—all now Kashmiris—complained of headaches and sickness, but none of them had been with us over the Chang La or Diger. From the summit we descended to the Deosai Plateau, across which we were to travel for the next three days. The dread Deosai is a large track of high, uninhabited table land, lying between Skardu and Kashmir. Its average height is from 13,000, to 13,500 feet, and it is open for only two or three months in the year. In late autumn the Deosai is particularly dangerous on account of the bitter winds which sweep across it, and from which there is no protection. We passed many skeletons of ponies, which were proof enough of the deadliness of this inhospitable region. We crossed it at the easiest season. It should, in July, have been infested with giant mosquitos, but we luckily saw none at all.

The general aspect of the Deosai is of undulating plains and rolling downs. Upon the horizon on all

sides stand snowy peaks. In summer there is grass everywhere, and in places it is even luxuriant, but there is not a vestige of wood to be found. Marmots live in hundreds amongst the rocks, and their shrill cries fill the air. I shot a few; but they are very cautious, and though they shrieked defiantly at a distance, skipped down into their holes as soon as we approached. I found that by quickly running round to the opposite side to which they had first seen me, I sometimes got a shot at them. Even then, unless killed outright, they managed to get down into the crannies of heaped up rocks, amongst which they lived.

We were constantly fording swift rivers, some of which were quite formidable. Fortunately a lot of spare Kashmiri ponies were travelling with us, and these helped us to get across more or less dry. The Kalapani was the deepest of these streams. We got to it late in the afternoon, by which time it was much too swollen to cross; so we had to camp beside it and wade over in the dark next morning. It was *not* a pleasant crossing. The Barab (big water) was equally difficult. It is a four days march across the Deosai; but we were in a hurry for the delights of Kashmir, and we crossed it in three days. We reached the foot of the Sari Sungar Pass at noon on the 24th of July. The climb to the top (14,200 feet) was easy, but the snow in places was soft, and the glare quite intolerable. The summit is about one mile across, shut in all the way by silent white peaks. It is considered a dangerous place for avalanches so late in the day, and

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we passed along as swiftly and noiselessly as possible. There were two frozen lakes, each about half a mile long, which had to be skirted, and then came a steep descent to a rough valley called the Chota Deosai. There is again a slight rise, known as the Stak-pi La, or Chota Burzil, and then a long descent to Burzil Chowki on the Gilgit road.

Coming from Kashmir I once thought Burzil Chowki a desolate spot. After six hundred miles of Ladakh and Baltistan I now believed I had never seen anything so green as its grassy flower spangled slopes. Masses of dainty columbines, anemones, buttercups and forget-me-nots covered the hills. There was a comfortable hut at Burzil Chowki, and the dread Burzil Pass rising above it was now nothing to us. Our way led not over snow passes, but to glassy lakes, and a deck chair on the prow of a house boat.

We reached the summit of the Rajdaingan at sunrise on the 28th July. It had been raining in the night, and we now looked down from the pass into cloud-land. The Woolar lay hidden for a while in sheets of white mist, and the snows of the Pir Panjal, lit by the rays of the rising sun, floated flaming red on a sea of clouds.

But as we descended through the dripping forests to Tragbal, the mists were dispelled by a flood of sunshine. Kashmir now lay mapped out below us. Boats dotted the Woolar lake. Haramuk rose majestically beyond. Little puffs of mist clung to the pine forests. I confess I had never seen anything so charming before, as this dear, familiar Kashmir.

The *Diana* awaited us at Bandipore. The river journey was lazy and uneventful. Once more we passed under the pile bridges of Srinagar, and turned into the Chenar Bagh by the little silver temple. Once more we resumed the comforts of civilization, with which Srinagar becomes associated. We passed again along the water-ways of the Dal to spend quiet days under the *chenars* of the Nishat. I would not wish to renew the splendours of these Mogul Gardens. I should not care to see them, as Vigne did, in possession of some besotted Sikh, or even decorated for Jehangir's feasts. They are infinitely more lovely as they are, with eastern terraces and cascades, a wilderness of petunias, and the lake spread out below in the sunset. Thus, at peace, I like to survey the incidents of these journeys. It has not been barren all the way from Dan to Beersheba. Only a man could find it so who cannot feel the presence of the Kulu Gods, who cannot hear the song of mountain streams, or know the eloquent silence of the snows. A few impressions stand out above the rest. The wild beauty of Liderwat, the magnificence of Nunga Parbat, Himis the great Buddhist monastery, the mournful grandeur of Martand, these memories become priceless possessions for all time.

The Treasure of the East.

Oh ! what tales have been told of the riches and gold,
 Of splendour and pomp oriental.
 I had yearned for no less than a dusky princess
 With manners attractive and gentle.
 On an elephant's back I intended to track,
 The tigers you shoot by appointment.
 I had fancied at least with the rajas I'd feast.
 I've met with severe disappointment.

The treasures I find are not of this kind.
 In fact, I'm perpetually stony.
 But nevertheless, I like to possess
 A thousand, or so, rupee pony.
 I keep up a band with no cash in hand,
 And I live in a style that is regal.
 Each year I devote a ten rupee note
 To the Derby—although t'is illegal.
 Unless I should win it, I plainly can see
 My creditors all will be waiting on me
 And the tone of their speech will be legal.

My possessions though few, have been bought with a view
 Of meeting all sorts of conditions,
 I've a bed and a tent, and a tub that is lent,
 A kettle of hoary traditions,
 And a kerosine tin, oh ! a very fine tin,
 A teapot that's made of enamel.
 When I move into camp, I've a hurricane lamp
 That hangs on the neck of a camel.
 Now these are the things you must own in the East
 To hang round the neck of a slobbering beast,
 An *ouf*, the most querulous camel.

Let me carry my tent, when on holiday bent.

I'll pitch it far over the passes.

I will camp neath the snow, with the world spread below ;

Hills covered with flowers and grasses.

With a couple of stones, and a few chicken bones,

My *bearer* proceeds with the cooking :

To embellish each course with the Worcestershire sauce

His hobby, when no one is looking.

To investigate deep the way that he cooks,

To sniff at his dusters, and peer into nooks,

Would teach you a deal about cooking

Richest gold is hid here, by this lake of Kashmir,

Surrounded by snowy capped mountains ;

With a suitable book, like Tom Moore's *Lalla Rookh*,

I lie on the grass by the fountains,

Dreaming dreams of Akbar, in this old Shalimar,

In Nur Mahal's garden of pleasure,

It is here that I find a rich feast for the mind,

Hamn ust—the Orient's treasure.

The mines of Vathek could not tempt me the least.

A secret more subtle lies hid in the East

—And *that* is the Orient's treasure.

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